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MAGAZINE

Collaborative effort key to
Ebola crisis management

Guangzhou encapsulates
China, past and present

Department office administers
refugee resettlement



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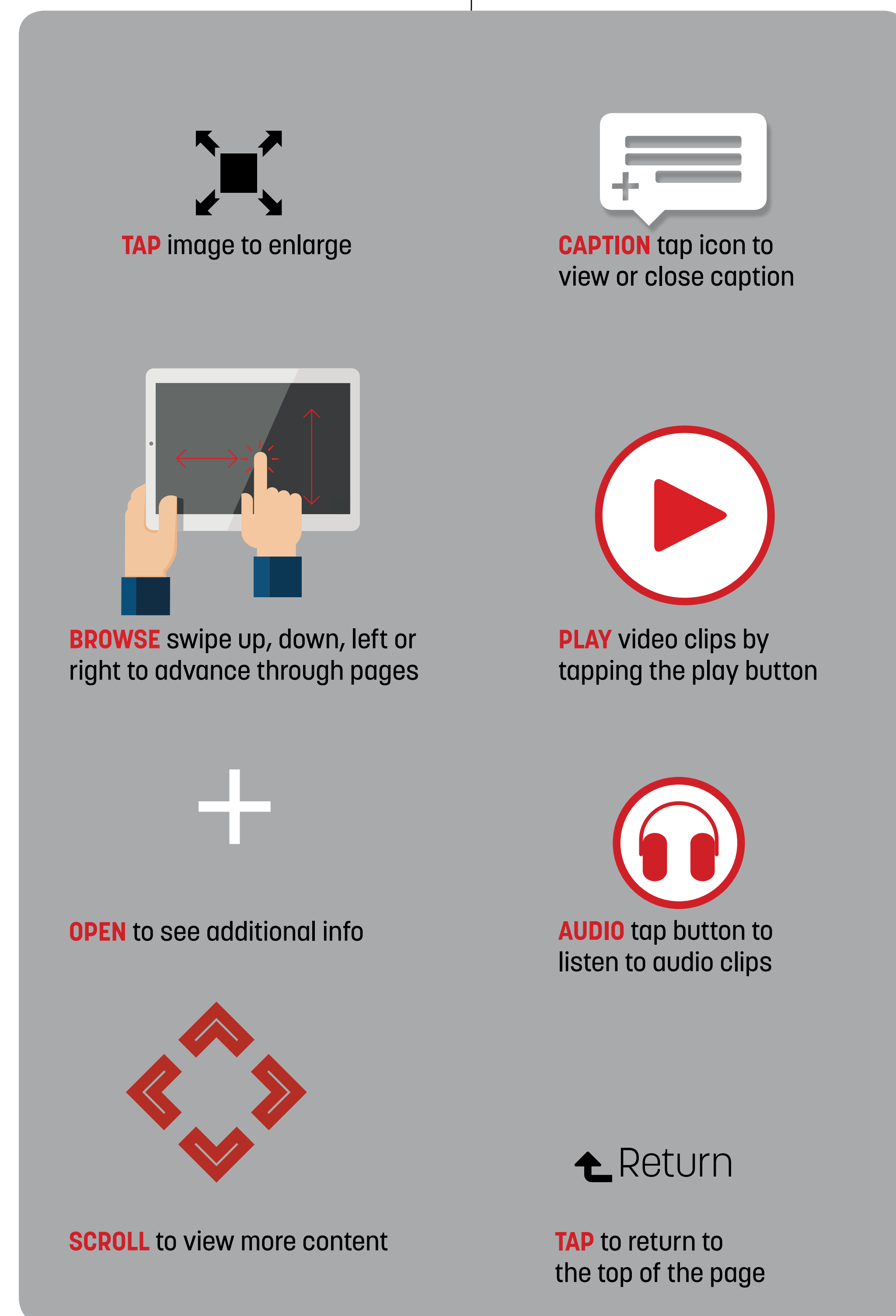
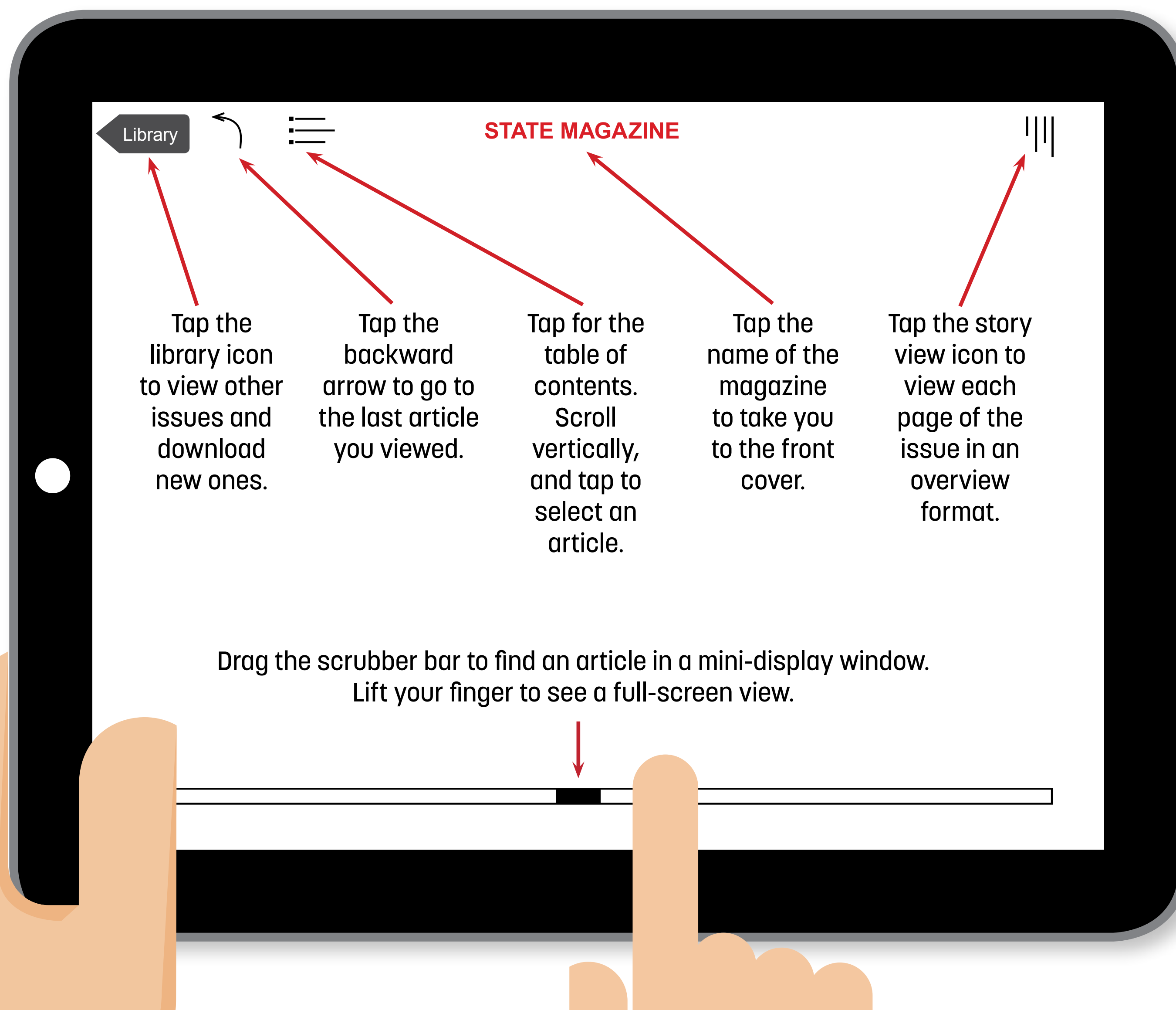
As a general rule, red graphics signal interactivity, but any button with a corresponding icon will behave accordingly.

Tap them any place you see them.

In the Table of Contents and on the cover, all titles can be tapped to jump directly to an article.

Swipe up or down to advance pages within articles.

Swipe to the left to advance to the next article, or to the right to go back to the previous.



Features

Home Away From Home

Department office administers refugee resettlement

Viral Response

Collaboration key to effective Ebola crisis management

Post of the Month: Guangzhou

Chinese megacity spans past and future

Magna Carta in China

Consulate Guangzhou displays historic document

Local Encouragement

Post promotes Roma integration

Diplomat's Homecoming

Return to country where dad was ambassador

Pie Fight!

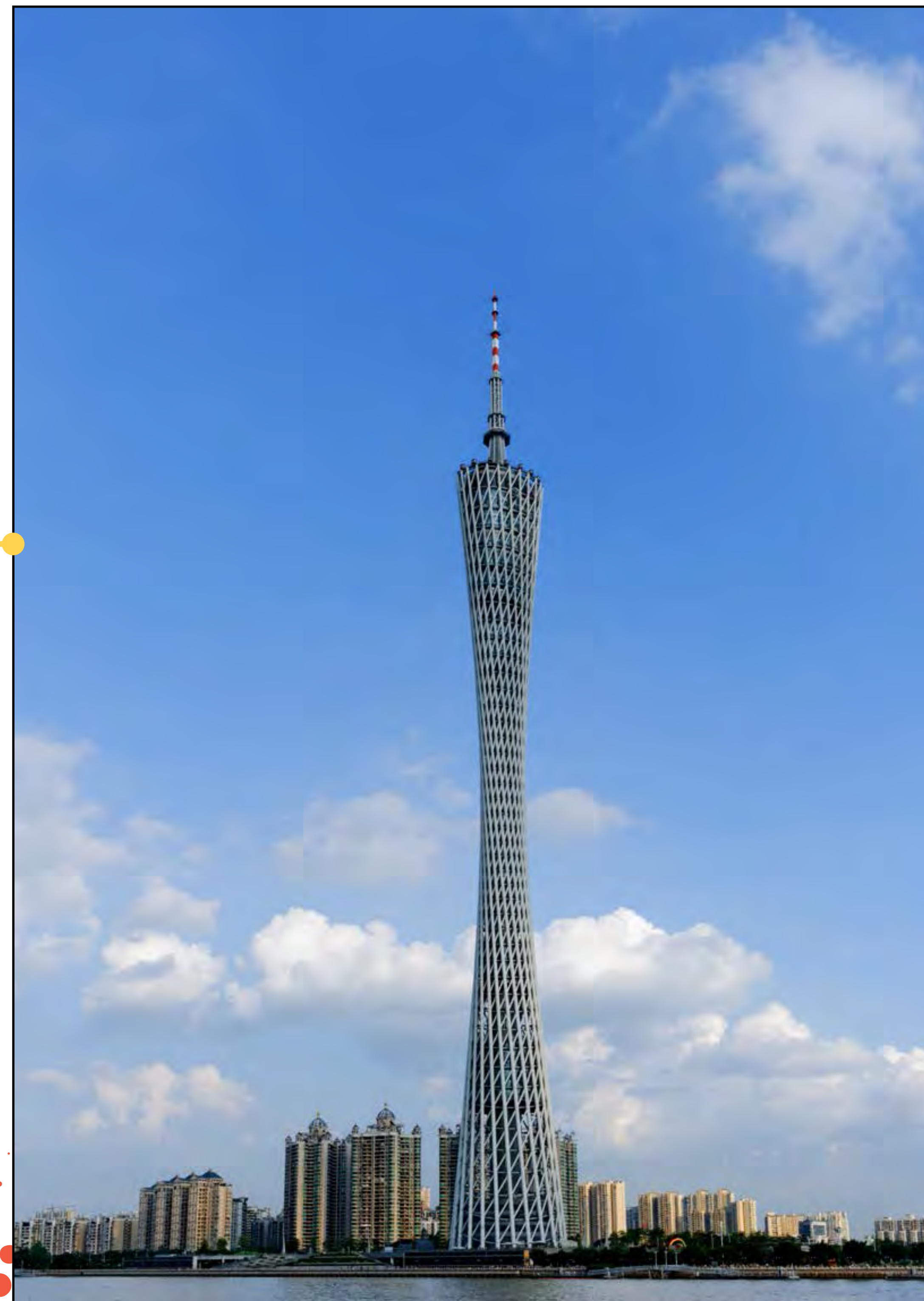
Consulate Shanghai promotes morale

Food for Thought

U.S. pavilion breaks records as Expo Milan ends

Simplicity and Transparency

HR Reviews Bidding, Assignment Process



Columns

In the News

Direct from the D.G.

Diversity Notes

America the Beautiful

In Brief

Retirements

Lying in State

Appointments

In Memoriam

End State

STATE MAGAZINE



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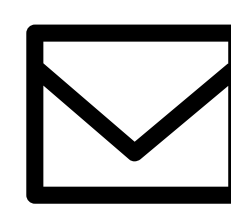
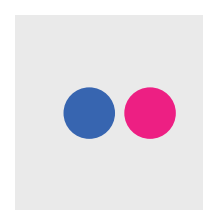
Deadlines

**The submission deadline for the February issue is December 20.
The deadline for the March issue is January 20.**

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A group photo shows attendees at the 2015 ASP symposium.
Photo by Jodie Tawiah

Event Addresses Intercountry Adoption

To support intercountry adoption and address challenges that sometimes impede it, the Department of State, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Council on Accreditation hosted the first Adoption Service Provider (ASP) symposium Sept. 28–29. The symposium, “A Collaborative Future for Adoption,” drew approximately 140 participants from across the U.S. government and adoption service provider community.

At the event, the Bureau of Consular Affairs’ Office of Children’s Issues (CI) introduced CA’s new intercountry adoption strategy, which focuses on assessing the availability of intercountry adoption worldwide, the development of tools and initiatives to support intercountry adoption, and ways to improve the Department’s communication with the U.S. adoption community. In small-group sessions, participants discussed ideas to support these three main components.

“It was exciting to listen to the stimulating conversations and feel the energy in the room focused on finding permanency for children,” said Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Michele Thoren Bond.

Much of the symposium discussion related to intercountry adoption in specific countries of origin, changes to pre-adoption training requirements and post-adoption services, and exploring possible policies to facilitate adoptions by relatives, when in the child’s best interests. Ambassador Susan Jacobs, special advisor for children’s issues, spoke of the need to build on the collaborative effort “to ensure that intercountry adoption remains an option for children around the world.”

This symposium was one of CI’s efforts to increase the frequency and quality of communication with the U.S. adoption community. Regarding attendee feedback, CI is streamlining how it receives and responds to inquiries, redesigning its outreach efforts and revamping how it updates constituents on issues related to adoptions. More information is available at travel.state.gov. ▀





Secretary of State John Kerry shakes hands with President of the Federal Republic of Germany Joachim Gauck, standing before the Signature Segment of the Berlin Wall at the U.S. Diplomacy Center Oct. 7.

Photo by Michael Gross

Center Gains Key Piece of Berlin Wall

On Oct. 7, the U.S. Diplomacy Center celebrated the arrival of a large slab of the Berlin Wall, dubbed the Signature Segment. At the ceremony, which also honored the strong U.S.-German relationship, Secretary of State John Kerry and the president of the Federal Republic of Germany, Joachim Gauck, addressed the 250 invited guests. Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland, chairman of the Transatlantic Council Frederick Kempe and the chairman of the Diplomacy Center Foundation, William Harrop, also spoke.

Secretary Kerry said that receiving a part of the Berlin Wall was a time to “pay tribute to an indelible partnership between two great countries.... As we look back almost a quarter of a century after German reunification, we can take unbelievable pride in the relationship between our two nations.”

Prior to the ceremony in the Benjamin Franklin Room, Secretary Kerry, President Gauck and others viewed the Signature Segment, which has been installed at the construction site of the U.S. Diplomacy Center at the 21st Street entrance of the Harry S Truman building.

The Signature Segment derives its name from having been signed by 27 individuals who played key roles in bringing about an end to the Cold War and reunification of Germany. They include former U.S. President George H.W. Bush, German President Gauck, former Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Nobel Peace Prize winner and former President of Poland Lech Walesa, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and former U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker III.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany in 1990 resulted from decades of diplomatic engagement and the courage of the German people, and the U.S. Diplomacy Center said it hopes the memorial to the Wall’s removal will remain an inspiration for years to come.

Click for more [info.](#) ■





Patricia Pittarelli, left, Division Chief for the Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Division, makes a point while Ann Cody, DAG Council Member and Paralympian gold medalist listens.

Photo by Ed Warner

Panel Calls for More Dialogue on PTSD

To mark National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the Department's Disability Action Group (DAG) sponsored a panel entitled "PTSD in the Context of Conducting U.S. Foreign Policy" on Oct. 14. The panel looked at post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of serving in high-threat, high-stress assignments and secondary traumatic stress as a consequence of close contact with victims of trauma.

PTSD can also be a result of common dangers that Foreign Service families face, such as being victims of violent crime or experiencing a natural disaster.

Beth Payne, an FSI associate dean and a member of the Transition Center's Resilience Project, quoted experts who estimate that 7.8 percent of the U.S. population will have PTSD at some point in their lives, and advocates early treatment as a key to recovery.

Col. David Benedek, M.D., of the Department of Defense Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, told the meeting that secondary traumatic stress is common among psychiatrists and social workers dealing with the survivors of rape and child abuse. When State personnel have positions where they regularly encounter victims of violent attacks or torture, or read of gross human rights abuses, these too can negatively affect their psyches.

Dr. Stephen Young, director of Mental Health Services in the Office of Medical Services, said MED has, since 2006, been working on programs to address PTSD and has partnered with FSI to reach out to employees before, during and after their time in a dangerous assignment, to alert them to the risk of developing PTSD and the treatment options.

More information is available [here](#) and [here](#) and from the [Department's Employee Consultation Service and Employee Assistance Program](#), via [email](#) or by calling 703-812-2257. Employees may also contact the Department's Deployment Stress Management Program or call 703-875-4828. Watch the PTSD in the context of conducting U.S. foreign Policy [video](#). ■





The working group poses during its tour of the DHS detention facility.
Photo by Kenneth Smith

U.S. Officials Cooperate on Border

To improve interagency cooperation at the San Ysidro Land Port of Entry (LPOE) in Tijuana, Mexico, the busiest land port in the Western Hemisphere, a group of U.S. mid-level officials based on both sides of the border toured a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) detention facility near Otay Mesa, Calif., in July.

The idea for the tour came from Stacy Saravia, visa chief at the U.S. Consulate General in Tijuana. Just months earlier, she and Fraud Prevention Manager Kristyna Rabassa launched a bimonthly interagency working group that now involves 24 participants, representing such agencies as the San Diego Passport Agency, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The group seeks to identify areas of mutual concern and improve communication. In April, the working group visited the USCIS asylum office in Los Angeles. The visit brought branches of DHS together and provided USCIS with an opportunity to dispel some common myths about the asylum process. USCIS also shed light on trends among Mexican asylum cases that were also useful for officials at the ports of entry. In June, the group traveled to the San Ysidro LPOE to see how the asylum-claim process worked. These sessions tied together two essential parts of the asylum process and enabled USCIS and CBP to find opportunities for cooperation, information sharing and streamlining procedures.

Saravia said the group has provided pick-up-the-phone access for participants. When a question or issue of broad concern comes up, they now have points of contact throughout the government, both locally and nationally, helping each other facilitate legitimate travelers' entry to the U.S. while maintaining security at the border. ■





Conference panelists discuss the use of evaluation.

Photo by Anthony Corbin

Event Highlights Program Evaluation's Role

Several hundred attendees gathered at the George C. Marshall Conference Center on Oct. 6 for the Department of State's 2015 Evaluation Institute. With a theme of "Evaluation in Practice," the event brought together program managers and evaluation specialists from throughout the Department and from other public and private entities to share experiences and success stories of evaluations that focused on data and results.

Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom spoke of the importance of monitoring and evaluation in ensuring accountability for performance and transparency. "Evaluations can provide a valuable snapshot in assessing if our programs are having the intended effect," she said. At a keynote presentation, foreign policy analysts from the Netherlands highlighted a model they use to evaluate national diplomatic interventions in multilateral decision-making arenas.

In the afternoon, a panel on Evidence-Based Policymaking featured experts from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the Government Accountability Office and the Office of Management and Budget. Their presentations centered on the importance of results as a key driver of decisions.

During the day, attendees participated in 11 interactive workshops. In one, Juliet Dulles of the Bureau of Budget and Planning discussed the tools to help groups communicate evaluation findings visually. Shrupti Shah of the Deloitte Consulting LLP GovLab think tank reminded participants that "not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted" by sharing lessons gained by the United Kingdom's efforts to create governmentwide performance targets. ▣





Deputy Special Representative Thomas Debass, right, talks with a member of the diaspora community in the partnerships marketplace held during Global Diaspora Week.

Photo by Aldrinana Leung

Department Celebrates Global Diaspora Week

To celebrate the potential of diaspora communities as partners in development and diplomacy, the Secretary's Office of Global Partnerships hosted the annual Global Diaspora Week (GDW) from Oct. 11–17. The weeklong celebration, organized through the International diaspora Engagement Alliance (IdEA) partnership, featured more than 90 events in more than 20 countries to create awareness, enable collaboration and enhance learning among those working with diaspora communities.

The events included more than 20 cultural activities hosted by the government of Georgia's office for diaspora issues, and webinars, such as the Department's MapGive online workshop on OpenStreetMap, where participants learned how geographic information can support humanitarian and development initiatives. U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Athens and Beirut also hosted successful GDW events. The first GDW, in 2014, featured more than 70 events in eight countries.

At the GDW launch event on Oct. 9, Secretary of State John Kerry commented on the importance of diasporas in meeting today's global challenges. "Diaspora communities are often the prime movers in responding to important events, whether we're talking about a natural disaster or a terror attack, a financial crisis or even emerging business opportunities," he said, adding that diaspora communities "are often the first people to know about an issue and bring it to the attention of people in positions of power."

The GDW launch event, under the theme "Partnering for Global Impact," drew approximately 300 attendees representing the United States and a variety of countries of heritage. Speakers included representatives from the Department and USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Peace Corps and the White House.

Find more information on the Department of State's engagement with diaspora communities at diasporaalliance.org and [@DiasporaatState](https://twitter.com/DiasporaatState). ▣





Ambassador Maureen Cormack, front row fourth from right, meets with her youth council at the Olympic resort of Jahorina in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Oct. 23.

Photo by Adnan Bujak

Post Celebrates Accords' Anniversary

Twenty years after the Dayton Peace Accords ended the brutal war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo commemorated the anniversary by engaging in a nationwide campaign to foster a common vision for the country's future.

Branded as “Zajedno Postizemo Više” (“Together We Achieve More”), the yearlong project included a challenge to get 20,000 volunteers to improve their communities, highlighting the importance of civic activism. Photo and essay contests encouraged national pride and a hackathon generated new ideas for using technology to overcome the nation's lingering problems. The embassy also employed traditional and social media to feature vignettes of the nation's young people expressing what 20 years of peace has allowed them to achieve, what it means to be from BiH and their plans for the future.

The campaign's logo, displayed on T-shirts and bumper stickers, was also featured in promotional material for events the post sponsored nationally, which all underscored the country's uniqueness and why its citizens should feel personally invested in seeing it continue to progress.

Ambassador Maureen Cormack launched the campaign in January and regularly emphasized its themes of the need for a shared identity and national vision. To mark the day the historic peace agreement was reached, Nov. 21, USAID and the Office of Public Affairs invited the next generation of the nation's leaders to a celebration at the National Museum, which was newly reopened thanks to embassy efforts. Time capsules collected from high schools as part of USAID's promotion of reconciliation will be sealed in the museum and opened on the 40th anniversary of the Dayton Accords in 2035.

The museum event also featured live music and exhibits. ■





High school students ask questions after attending panel discussions.
Photo by Kelsey Brannan

Groups Collaborate on Forum for High Schoolers

On Friday, Oct. 16, two of the Department's Employee Affinity Groups (EAGs), the Carl T. Rowan Chapter of Blacks In Government (BIGCTR) and the Presidential Management Fellows Advisory Council (PMFAC), co-hosted their first Youth Forum. The event exposed 75 students from a Washington, D.C., high school to the Department's careers in international affairs and exchange opportunities.

BIGCTR President Christian Blackman opened the event and spoke about her hope to continue the group's youth outreach next year. "When I started working at the Department and learned about all the youth exchange programs offered, I wish that I had known about them in high school because I would have applied for them," Blackman said, adding that an event like the Youth Forum "makes international programs a reality for the students."

Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken's keynote remarks emphasized the importance of workforce diversity. "Part of that starts with making sure that the people who represent the United States, our diplomats, are actually representative of America and its diversity, because that truly is our greatest strength," he said. Doing so, he added, promotes ability in diplomacy and the ability to connect with "virtually every country, group, religion or race in the world, because all of them are represented here in the United States."

The event began with a breakfast where representatives from various agencies and external organizations told students of their experiences in foreign affairs and answered questions about working abroad. Later, students heard from two interagency panel discussions that focused on careers, exchanges and the resources available for students to pursue a career in foreign affairs. National BIG President Darlene Young provided the event's closing remarks.

[Click for more info.](#) ■





Members of the FSNPLC are all smiles after a meeting with Ambassador Marcia Bernicat (second from right) at the embassy.

Photo by Mohini Madgavkar

Group Promotes FSN Leadership

At the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka, applications for the Ambassador's Foreign Service National Professional Leadership Council (PLC) are now being evaluated to identify a council for the coming year. The council, which celebrated its one-year anniversary in August, has eight young members who change annually. They meet with the U.S. ambassador and other high-level management personnel every other month and shadow the ambassador at events to observe and learn leadership.

The PLC's eight members (four male, four female) are selected from different agencies and sections after writing an essay to explain why they want to join and how they can contribute. For the first year, the management office, which solicits applicants, received 26 applications.

During its year of operation, the PLC surveyed U.S. Embassy Dhaka's FSNs to gauge their expectations of the council, learning most respondents wanted professional development opportunities. Therefore, the group organized three professional development workshops, with panel topics that included improving supervisor/supervisee relationships, professional communications and improving the work environment. The group also briefed the ambassador and senior staff on such topics as the challenges facing Bangladeshi youth and cultural nuances in management.

One PLC member, Rezwan Zahidi, a visa information assistant in the consular section, said his Intranet search found no similar councils. U.S. missions, he said, "do have local employee welfare associations, but their objectives are far different from the FSNPLC. Also, U.S. ambassadors have youth leadership councils in different countries worldwide where the members are not exclusively FSNs." ■



Direct from the D.G.

ARNOLD CHACON
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE



Thank You—Yes, You!

The holidays are a time for giving, sharing and celebrating with family, friends and loved ones. It's also an opportune time to express our appreciation for the work the men and women of the Department of State do year-round to advance U.S. interests and values and keep our country safe. At the Department's annual award ceremony, we recognize distinguished service in a variety of categories.

I was honored to take part in this year's ceremony, held last month. But we don't need a special occasion to thank our colleagues for their dedication, for the ordinary and extraordinary things they do in the interest of the American people. Nor should our expression of gratitude be a limited, once-a-year event.

Saying "please" and "thank you" are not signs we're going soft or touchy-feely. They are—and should be—sincere manifestations of our respect and appreciation for our colleagues. We value our people and the contributions they make to our nation's welfare, security and prosperity day in and day out, typically with little fanfare. At the same time, we're also mindful of a growing body of research that suggests "appreciation is the best motivation." That's why Google and other companies are trying to make workplace expressions of gratitude the norm rather than the exception.

Indeed, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and elsewhere believe it's not fear that's the best motivator; rather, a sense of appreciation is the most sustainable work motivator. Think about that: not money, not prestige, not power. And it makes sense: Promotions and awards, while significant and tangible, are probably not what will get you through a rough day at work. But knowing you are engaged in meaningful work that makes a difference and is appreciated will.

Happiness research underscores something we already intuitively understand: The happiest people tend to be the most grateful. Gratitude is the right attitude for all of us. The daily press of business sometimes gets in the way of the better angels of our nature, but we would do well to count our blessings and thank those around us, especially our colleagues.

As Americans we rightly pride ourselves on being tough (a quality our diplomats and employees share). But being tough does not mean being brusque. It turns out that in this—as in so many areas of life—our moms were right. Saying "please" and "thank you" is about a lot more than being polite. It's about understanding what makes us human and what makes us thrive as people and as an organization. It's what's smart and what's right. So, on behalf of the secretary and Department leadership, I want to thank you for all you do and wish you a joyful holiday season. ■

Arnold A. Chacon



Keep Calm and Give Mediation a Chance

Listening is free. In fact, it can save everyone time and money. Listening while seeking to understand is a significant part of what managers and employees do during mediation. The opportunity to step away from the emotional strain of conflict, and instead listen actively, and then problem-solve creatively with a colleague who feels he or she has been harmed can benefit everyone.

The Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR) is quite familiar with how conflict can permeate the workplace and negatively affect operations. Our goal is to always resolve conflict early, at the lowest level possible. Thankfully, we have an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) team very skilled at working with managers and employees to problem-solve and resolve conflict through mediation.

Conflict is often rooted in miscommunication. Mediation helps to repair working relationships by getting to the root of the issue. The mediator, a trained, neutral thirdparty, employs enhanced communication techniques to help parties better understand each other's concerns and works with them to collaboratively shape a workable solution. Each party has a role in shaping the outcome, which helps both sides feel more vested in its success. Even when mediation does not result in a resolution, the parties can walk away with a better understanding of the underlying reasons for the other's position, potentially improving working relationships. This benefits the parties directly involved and co-workers affected by the negative environment created by conflict.

Mediation is a powerful tool that has potential to solve even the most seemingly intractable workplace disputes. When employees can address their equal employment opportunity complaint early through mediation, they are less likely to turn to the formal phase of the complaint process. Our ADR team works with each party in advance of mediation to prepare them to participate effectively. In fiscal year 2015, mediators conducted 56 mediations, an increase of more than 40 percent over the previous year's volume. The increase in participation in the ADR program is attributed to more employees having confidence that they can be heard at the table, and to managers coming to the table to listen and to work at viable solutions to end the conflict presented.

Mediation offers the chance for a win-win solution early, rather than to expend energy and resources on an arduous legal process. There are a wide range of obvious and hidden costs to dysfunctional conflict in the workplace, from significant costs related to investigating, litigating or settling complaints, to the substantial time spent away from mission-related work to deal with a conflict. Our experience shows that mediation can work—when all parties come to the table ready to listen, and compromise, to reach an amicable solution.

Do not let conflict fester and boil over to the point where time, energy and money are spent unnecessarily. When conflict arises in the workplace, address it quickly and consider mediation as a viable option. Remember, mediation can lead to positive outcomes and transform working relationships. Whether you are a manager or employee, we owe it to ourselves and to our organization to productively handle conflict to focus our priorities on fulfilling the Department's mission. So, the next time you find yourself in the midst of conflict, keep calm and give mediation a chance.

S/OCR is here to assist with conflict that involves allegations of discrimination or harassment. The Office of the Ombudsman's Workplace Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center also offers mediation to resolve conflicts that are not discrimination related. If you have any questions or would like more information on ADR options, do not hesitate to contact S/OCR or the Office of the Ombudsman. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Robinson".



Pull tab for caption



Home Away From Home

Department administers refugee resettlement

By Irving Jones, program officer, Office of Admissions, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)

As refugees and migrants have poured into Europe, calls have grown for the United States to welcome more of them. The United States resettles more refugees than all other countries combined (more than 3 million refugees since 1975), doing so through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). PRM's Office of Admissions administers USRAP, which funds and manages a network of NGOs in the United States and NGOs and international organizations overseas.

The current refugee situation has increased the workload and visibility of USRAP, which has 304 offices in more than 175 U.S. communities and funds nine national resettlement agencies. From 2013 to 2015, the United States has admitted approximately 70,000 refugees, and it will raise that number to 85,000 in FY2016 and to 100,000 in FY2017, nearly a 50 percent increase over only two years. Of those to be

resettled in FY2016, at least 10,000 will be Syrians, but the program has, in just 2015 alone, worked with refugees from 67 nations. (The top five nationalities are Burmese, Iraqi, Somali, DRC Congolese and Bhutanese.)

Directed by Larry Bartlett, the Office of Admissions has 18 full-time Civil Service and Foreign Service employees and contractors. The office's work ranges from responding to inquiries from prospective volunteers to providing classified briefings about the security vetting system or expediting particularly vulnerable cases for resettlement. The office coordinates its work closely with U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) locations and the refugee coordinator in U.S. embassies. The huge increase in refugees headed for U.S. resettlement in the coming years means the office must collaborate with interagency partners and congressional leadership, and do outreach to U.S. communities

and the press.

Refugees have three options for permanent settlement after they leave their homelands. The preferable option is to be able to return home. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most refugees want to go home as soon as conditions allow them to return in safety and dignity, but that's often not a possibility. The next option is local integration in the country where they've taken asylum. But when that's also not



PRM Assistant Secretary Anne Richards greets refugees arriving at JFK International Airport.

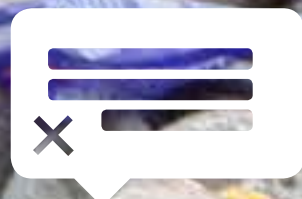
Photo by Irving Jones





A third of the refugees making the harrowing journey to Europe have fled the conflict in Syria, where a staggering 12.2 million people have left their homes since the conflict began in March 2011.

Photo by Ben White/ CAFOD



viable, the UNHCR may decide resettlement in a third country is the best option. Those cases are given to one of the roughly 26 countries with a resettlement program. The U.S. program, by far the largest, involves a wait of about 18–24 months from the refugee’s referral to his or her arrival in the United States, and that wait can affect the UNHCR’s decision to refer to the U.S. or another country.

Once referred to the United States, one of the nine PRM-funded overseas Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs) interviews the refugee and prepares information on his or her story of persecution. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also interviews every refugee considered for U.S. resettlement to determine if he or she meets the definition of a refugee under U.S. law. Next, each refugee undergoes security screening involving multiple federal intelligence, security and law enforcement agencies, including the FBI’s Terrorist Screening Center, DHS and Department of Defense, and the National Counterterrorism Center. Refugees also receive a health screening to identify those with a contagious disease before they travel



USRAP staff members discuss pressing issues during a team meeting.

Photo by Irving Jones

to the United States. (The medical screening rarely prevents a refugee from being resettled in the United States; usually, the illnesses found can be treated prior to the refugee’s trip or in the community where he or she is settled.)

Once a refugee’s case is finalized overseas, the case goes on a list. Every Wednesday, representatives of the nine United States refugee resettlement agencies meet in Rosslyn, Va., to determine which refugees will go to which cities.

The key factors are the refugee’s U.S. ties, and most refugees being resettled in the United States have family or friends here. Thus, the goal is to place the incoming refugee nearby, since that provides a local support network and facilitates job placement, which is essential in the resettlement program. Other factors in determining where a refugee goes can include language needs, medical needs or employment possibilities.

Assessing a U.S. community’s



receptivity to refugees can be challenging. Critical voices, such as those on blogs, can be louder than others, giving the impression that communities are not ready to open their doors. In each city that accepts refugees, many local organizations and volunteers devote time and compassion to welcoming refugees. To make for a smooth transition, resettlement agencies hold community consultations prior to proposing the number of refugee arrivals each year. Consultations involve state and local government officials; public health, education, welfare and social service officials; and the public itself.

In addition, PRM staff members meet with other community stakeholders to discuss the program and listen to concerns, answer questions and understand the community. Most communities are supportive, and their commitment and volunteerism are essential to the overall success of the program. Resettlement agencies work closely with volunteers and faith-based organizations to provide mentoring, orientation, support, English tutoring



Just before a town hall meeting to discuss refugee arrivals to Twin Falls, Idaho, Director of Refugee Admissions Larry Bartlett is interviewed by local media.

Photo by Irving Jones

and friendship to refugees arriving in their areas. Community support can range from donations of clothing, furniture, transportation and time, to co-sponsoring a refugee family

and serving as a partner in their resettlement. This helps refugees get enrolled in school, gain jobs, pay taxes and become productive members of their communities. ■



VIRAL RESPONSE

Department collaborations key to effective Ebola crisis management

MULTIPRONGED EFFORT

By Afua Riverson, foreign affairs officer, IIP and former Ebola Coordination Unit member

EBOLA FIRSTHAND

By Emily Green, Regional Affairs and Outreach Officer, Office of International Health and

MULTIPRONGED EFFORT

Several Department units met Ebola crisis

By Afua Riverson, foreign affairs officer, Bureau of International Information Programs and former Ebola Coordination Unit member

The Ebola outbreak that began more than a year ago is largely now under control, and the Department of State and U.S. diplomatic posts are now looking back and taking stock.

The outbreak, the longest and largest known occurrence of the disease, took thousands of lives and halted social and economic progress in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. While the outbreak grew in intensity and lethality, the international response lagged. However, the Department led early efforts to bring awareness of the magnitude of the problem to key allies and the interagency, private and nonprofit communities.

U.S. embassies were the vital platform on the ground for U.S. government efforts. As President Obama mobilized the

U.S. government and shifted international efforts into higher gear in September 2014, the Department began outreach at multiple levels, connecting with partner countries and organizations, especially the World Health Organization and other U.N. agencies, to increase and improve the timeliness of assistance on the ground.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USAID and the U.S. Public Health Service provided most of the operational U.S. government contributions, complementing the many contributions the Department made to getting and keeping the response up and running. Within the Department, the Bureaus of African Affairs, Legal Affairs, Consular Affairs, Management and Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, as well the

temporary Ebola Coordination Unit (ECU) and the Office of Medical Services (MED), plus many others were partners in the effort.

Launched in September 2014, the ECU organized the Department's response. The ECU consisted of a corps of volunteers from different bureaus led by Ambassador Nancy Powell and Ambassador Steve Browning. Through their combined efforts the ECU worked to mobilize more than \$2 billion in global assistance and facilitated donor collaboration with the U.N., affected governments and U.S. response programs. The ECU also coordinated the resolution of policy questions ranging from visa issuance to legal protections for U.S. government employees.

MED also had a role from the outbreak's start, working alongside the ECU and U.S. Embassies in





UNICEF and partners conduct Ebola education sessions at schools throughout the capital of Guinea, Conakry.

Photo by UNICEF Guinea

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. It monitored the situation and responded to mitigate risks and enhance the safety of embassy communities. In March 2014, before the first Ebola cases in Guinea were confirmed, the U.S. Embassy in Conakry's health unit approached MED, seeking information and recommendations on how to maintain its capability. By August, the cities of Monrovia and Freetown no longer offered the minimal level

of local health care they had provided prior to the outbreak. In the end, all three embassies remained open, without a single case of Ebola Virus Disease among the official American population or within the confines of any of the diplomatic facilities.

That fact, and the increasing difficulty of conducting medical evacuations

for any medical conditions, led MED to recommend an ordered departure of family members at several posts, reducing mission staff to only those employees critical for continued operations. To support the remaining staff, the Department's contract with Phoenix Air Group was used to make available a dedicated air ambulance in Accra, Ghana, for timely evacuation of non-Ebola patients.

The Phoenix Air Group's bio-containment capability was

essential—and in demand — because foreign and private interests also wanted exclusive use of that capability. Therefore, the Office of Acquisitions Management and MED's Office of Operational Medicine swiftly secured a contract that was flexible enough to meet the crisis. Few organizations or nations were willing to send their health care professionals to combat this virus unless medevac capabilities were available, should anyone on their staffs become infected.

In the end, working closely with the Departments of Health and Human Services, other federal agencies and the National Security staff, MED was responsible for the medical evacuation of 17 American and other international aid workers infected with Ebola and 29 patients who had a high-risk, having been exposed to the virus. In no case was there accidental transmission of the disease.

As the Department looks back over a year of responding to the Ebola virus in the three countries largely affected, it remains ready to prepare for and prevent future global health threats. ■

READ EBOLA FIRSTHAND ▼



EBOLA FIRSTHAND

Department battled African health crisis

By Emily Green, Regional Affairs and Outreach Officer, Office of International Health and Biodefense

I remember clearly the day in July 2014 that we learned two American missionaries working at a clinic in Liberia had come down with Ebola. I was assistant public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Conakry, Guinea, the country where the outbreak originated and one of the three countries at the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak.

In Guinea, we had been dealing with Ebola since March, but the international community had taken little notice, perhaps because previous outbreaks in Central Africa had infected only small villages and eventually fizzled out. But by summer, the cases of the infected missionaries and Sierra Leone's top doctor and the fact that an infected Liberian businessman was able to board a commercial flight to Nigeria brought the crisis to world attention.

There was something different about this outbreak: It was spreading quickly and in metropolitan slums. In July 2014, my colleagues and I realized that this was about to get big. People

were going to start noticing.

By August 2014, worldwide attention zeroed in on the crisis, bringing assistance from donor countries to the three Ebola-affected countries.

In August, after the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern and the governments of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea declared disasters, the U.S.

embassies in those countries requested USAID/ OFDA money and established a USAID-led interagency Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART). Meanwhile, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ramped up its engagement and sent considerable numbers of its world-renowned experts.



From left, MRIGlobal CEO Tom Stacks, Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy, Barbara Bennett of the Paul G. Allen Ebola Program/Vulcan, Inc. and Col. Brett Merritt, commander of the 94th Airlift Wing, celebrate the completion of two containerized biocontainment system units.

Photo by Afua Riverson

The Department also launched an Ebola Coordination Unit (ECU), which would coordinate efforts behind the scenes, bring more donors into the fight and build the policy and legal framework that enabled the DART's activities and kept Americans safe.

In my role as the embassy's





Inside the biocontainment unit, Dr. Will Walters, second from left, discusses the medevac capabilities available for health care workers fighting Ebola with Under Secretary Patrick Kennedy, left. From Walter's left are Charles Rosenfarb; medical director of the Office of Medical Services, and a CDC official.

Photo by Afua Riverson

assistant public affairs officer (APAO), I sat in on the ECU-led weekly coordination teleconferences reporting CDC's the latest statistics, sharing news from Embassy Conakry and identifying unmet needs.

Mission Guinea's response, led by the Ambassador to Guinea Alexander Laskaris, sought to care

for the sick by building Ebola Treatment Units, stopping the disease through tracing contact among those infected and to promote behavioral changes that would slow the spread of the disease and build trust between citizens and health officials.

To do so, we had to engage all members of the host nation, and,

in effect, make every officer at post a health officer. Fortuitously, I had that summer taken FSI's Health Diplomacy course, led by the Office of International Health and Biodefense and the Secretary's Office of Global Health Diplomacy.

Public diplomacy's role to inform, engage and influence the public became a vital bridge for health information in the outbreak's early days, and Conakry's public affairs section (PAS) found a willing and able partner in the CDC. Days after the Institute Pasteur confirmed the disease was Ebola, PAS and CDC communications specialist Craig Manning produced a series of French public service announcements

about Ebola by an infectious disease expert. The embassy distributed them to radio stations all over the country and shared them on its social media platforms, receiving hundreds of thousands of hits. As a result, Guineans regarded the embassy and CDC as credible information sources during a time of confusion surrounding the disease.



The mission's response to the Ebola crisis expressed its humanitarian values. To build on this, the post distributed French-language copies of President Obama's September 2014 speech to the people of West Africa regarding America's support in combating the Ebola outbreak, handing them out at its American Corners. The mission's network of youth contacts then shared the speech's video on mobile phones.

To further promote trust, the embassy, working with the CDC and International Foundation for Electoral Systems, set up town hall meetings throughout Guinea, to build trust between local leaders and health care officials. At one town hall meeting, I met Ebola survivor Marie Claire Tchecola, who was later honored to receive the Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award.

Throughout the crisis, the embassy spread the message that "Ebola is real; here is how to protect yourself," using posters, town hall meetings, women's social networks, billboards, graphic novels, the Short Message Service, voice messaging and even solar-powered video projectors. The post also helped rehabilitate Guinea's radio network, for sharing health information and news. Mission Sierra Leone and Mission Liberia's public diplomacy teams also spread health information through their networks.

During the crisis, I met excellent CDC communications specialists and epidemiologists, emergency

response experts from USAID and State Department officers. As the embassy's APAO, I traveled to Ebola Treatment Centers built with U.S. funds, seeing how the United States had met a tangible need at a crucial time.

Although the world was unprepared for the Ebola outbreak, the crisis would have been far worse without the help of the State Department, USAID, the CDC, and our international and non-governmental partners. ■

Ambassador Steve Browning accompanies staff of the former Ebola Coordination Unit.
State Department photo



GUANGZHOU

Megacity encapsulates China, past and present



A colorfully-lit boat ferries passengers down the Pearl River near downtown Guangzhou. *Photo by Jorge Dalmau*



By Nathan Kato-Wallace, vice consul and Linley Wartenberg, consular office management specialist, U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou, China

A ferry slips lazily down the Pearl River as if drifting through time past the 19th-century consulates on Shamian Island, where Western diplomacy in China took root, and past the 100-story glass skyscrapers of New Town, icons of today’s booming export economy. This is Guangzhou—a city where past and present live side by side, where the old pause to observe ancient traditions and the young race breathlessly toward the future.

There is perhaps no better place for a budding diplomat to sharpen his or her skills. A tour in Guangzhou offers the opportunity to view the inner workings of one of the busiest U.S. consulates in the world and the chance to contribute to one of the United States’ most consequential foreign policy relationships.

Known as Canton for much of its history, Guangzhou is located at the confluence of the Pearl River and a network of tributaries that irrigate the lands of south China. To the city’s immediate south, the river forms an estuary whose brackish waters flow 80 miles to Hong Kong and Macau and out into the South China Sea. All along these waters, small fishing villages have blossomed into industrial powerhouses, and today a megacity of 40 million people stretches almost unbroken from Guangzhou to the sea.

Guangzhou residents are heirs to a cosmopolitan legacy of international trade and migration that spans millennia. At the time when the Prophet Muhammad was nearing the end of his life in Mecca, seventh-century Muslims worshipped in Guangzhou (known to them as Khanfu) at what is now one of the oldest mosques in the world. And when the first



Ambassador Max Baucus engages audience members at a Guangzhou Consulate General public outreach event.

Photo by Weijia Li





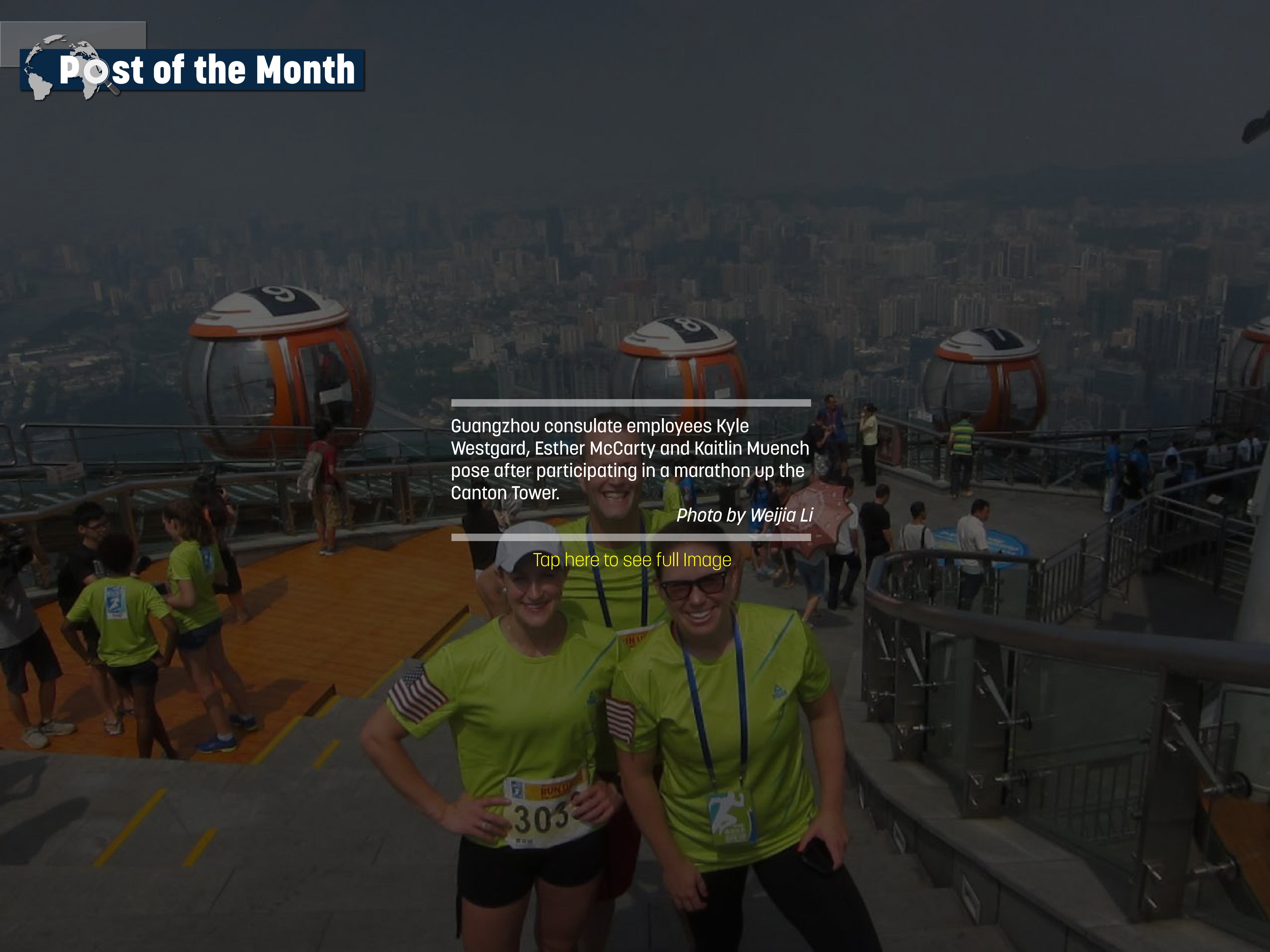


Post of the Month

Guangzhou consulate employees Kyle Westgard, Esther McCarty and Kaitlin Muench pose after participating in a marathon up the Canton Tower.

Photo by Weijia Li

[Tap here to see full Image](#)





Guangzhou's Canton Tower, the city's landmark, sits on the banks of the Pearl River in view of the consulate.

Photo by Shujian Liang

U.S. merchant ship to China raised sail in New York in 1784, it found safe harbor in the trading port of Canton among trading vessels from many nations. Ever since, south China has been at the forefront of U.S. diplomacy. U.S.-China consular relations date to the 1844 appointment of American consuls to the ports now known as Fuzhou and Xiamen in Fujian Province. Nine years later, the first U.S. consulate opened in Canton.

After tumultuous years under Mao Zedong, south China became a proving ground for the economic and social reforms that would come to define modern China and fuel its precipitous rise. The “made in China” products manufactured in this region soon dominated retail store shelves around the world, giving south China the

reputation as “the world’s factory floor.” Today, the four provinces of Consulate Guangzhou’s district contribute an astounding \$1.7 trillion to China’s GDP from industries as diverse as low-skill manufacturing to high-tech medical products.

Advocating for U.S. business interests in an economy roughly the size of Australia’s is a critical component of Consulate General Guangzhou’s mission, and the impact this has on the U.S. economy is difficult to overstate. The consular section in Guangzhou issues the overwhelming majority of the worldwide total of immigrant investor (EB-5) visas. Guangzhou is the No. 1 nonimmigrant visa post with more than a million applicants in FY 2015, also managing the largest caseload of immigrant visas for U.S.-bound adoptive children. Its Foreign Commercial



Participants in a disability job fair gather in Lincoln Hall, the visa applicant waiting room.

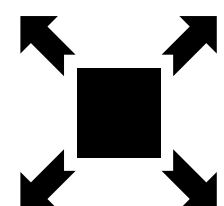
Photo by Wanmei Yang



Service records more export success stories than any other FCS office. South China is also an important focus of SelectUSA efforts to promote investment in the United States.

At the Consulate General, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office works with its Chinese counterparts and American rights holders to safeguard intellectual property, and the Agriculture Trade Office connects American farmers with a growing \$9 billion U.S. export market. In addition, two components of the Department of Homeland Security—Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Citizen and Immigration Services—protect the U.S. immigration process. By facilitating these critical flows of investment, trade, legitimate travel and immigration, Consulate Guangzhou supports tens of thousands of U.S. jobs back home.

Consulate General Guangzhou's growth has been phenomenal— the number of Department of State direct hires has jumped 184 percent in the last 10 years to the current number of 133. The consular section has grown in step with the booming economy of south China and to keep up with rising visa demand, increasing more than threefold over the last





Post of the Month

The U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou opened in a new facility, July 2013. U.S. staffing has increased 184 percent over the past 10 years to 133 direct hires.

Photo by Zhishun Jin

[Tap here to see full Image](#)

decade from 20 officers in 2005 to 62 today. The regional security office was a two-person section ten years ago; it now has 10 direct hires and stood up a new Marine Security Guard detachment in 2013.

Guangzhou's top-notch local staff numbers have climbed as well, to 300 members today. "The explosive growth throughout the mission highlights the important role Consulate Guangzhou plays in the relationship between the U.S. and China," Management Officer Tor Petersen says. "Guangzhou is now the third largest U.S. consulate in the world and has more people than our missions in Singapore, Malaysia or Hong Kong."

While the United States does not have a bilateral work agreement with China, 30 eligible family member (EFM) jobs are currently available and more are in the works. "There's plenty of work to be found in this busy consulate," says Daniel Binder, an EFM management specialist.

Officers serving in Guangzhou work in one of the Department's newest diplomatic facilities. Opened in July 2013, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver-certified plan for Consulate Guangzhou's new \$300 million compound demonstrates a commitment to environmentally friendly growth. Importantly, the new facility doesn't seem to be part of a high-walled "fortress America;" its perimeter has a simple fence that allows passers-by to look through to the gardens within. This inviting feel is showcased weekly when the consulate opens its doors and hosts public affairs events in its expansive Lincoln Hall. In a country where censorship and opacity are pervasive, transparency and free expression are a resounding statement of American principles.

Work in Guangzhou is not without challenges, however. The top-down political hierarchy in China gives local officials little incentive to



Jennifer Galt, the former consul general in Guangzhou, greets visa applicants as they provide biometric data. In 2015, Guangzhou issued more than 1 million nonimmigrant visas.

Photo by Zhishun Jin





Consular officer Kira Peterson and several local staff members and children celebrate Earth Day at the consulate's garden. *Photo by Shujian Liang*



cooperate with foreign diplomats. For instance, an officer's attempt to gain approval for an address to local university students can become entangled in mountains of red tape. "I frequently encounter resistance by local government officials who sometimes scuttle visits and meetings at the last minute," says Ryan Engen, who coordinates the consular section's City Officer program. "That being said, there is still tremendous scope to get things done."

Pursuing more sensitive goals, such as advocating for labor and human rights or a wronged American business, can be even more daunting. Success in this environment depends on an officer's ability to form relationships, engender trust and seek win-win solutions. One way Consulate Guangzhou succeeds is through its Civil Society Working Group, which blends consulate officers, public diplomacy resources, local NGOs and activists to promote the development of civil society in China.

While the learning curve is steep, a tour in Guangzhou strengthens officers' skills. One of the U.S. posts with the highest number of entry-level officers (58 and growing), Guangzhou puts future Foreign Service leaders on a path to success.

Guangzhou is an ideal post for the Sinophile and those new to China. The crowded back alleys of old Canton offer an alluring array of exotic sights and smells—from vendors selling dried seafood and herbal remedies to tea houses serving authentic Cantonese dim sum. Modernization has brought to Guangzhou an array of supermarkets and shopping malls offering all the creature comforts of home. These, combined with reliable public transportation and a pleasant climate, make Guangzhou an eminently livable city.

The post also offers a housing pool that is second to none. Most officers live in new apartment complexes and can easily bike or walk to work. Most apartments have three or four bedrooms and are surrounded by shops, restaurants and vibrant urban life. Officers and family members often say that housing in Guangzhou is better than at any of their previous posts.

Families do especially well in Guangzhou. Many children in the consulate community attend the American International School of



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Local and American staff members in Guangzhou compete annually in the city's Dragon Boat Race on the Pearl River.

Photo by Shan X Yu



Guangzhou (AISG), one of the top international schools in Asia. It boasts a 10:1 student/teacher ratio with 70 percent of faculty holding a master's degree or above. "AISG is top-notch—both academically and socially," says Guangzhou Outreach Unit Chief Paul Baldwin. "It's one of the reasons my family decided to extend our tour here." Families spend time together strolling in one of the city's many green spaces, taking in an international performance at the Opera House or biking along miles of riverside pathways.

And when one needs a break from the mainland, Guangzhou's international connections are a major perk. Hong Kong and Macau are an easy two-hour train ride away, and Guangzhou's airport offers affordable direct flights to major cities in Asia and Europe. For officers in Guangzhou, a walk around the temples at Cambodia's Angkor Wat or a dip in the waters off Borneo are just a weekend's adventure away.

In a region known for manufacturing, the economic and social reforms pioneered in south China are also building the future of Chinese society. Time in Guangzhou offers a chance to glimpse this future and help shape it, making a tour here professionally and personally rewarding. ▣



Kyle Westgard, Eddie Eichler, Anthony Brosnan and Caleb Portnoy jam during Consulate General Guangzhou's "The Voice of Consulate" talent show, held in the visa applicant waiting room known as Lincoln Hall.

Photo by Shujian Liang





At a Glance China

Capital: Beijing
Government Type: Communist state
Area: 9,596,960 sq km (slightly smaller than the U.S.)
Population: 1,367,485,388

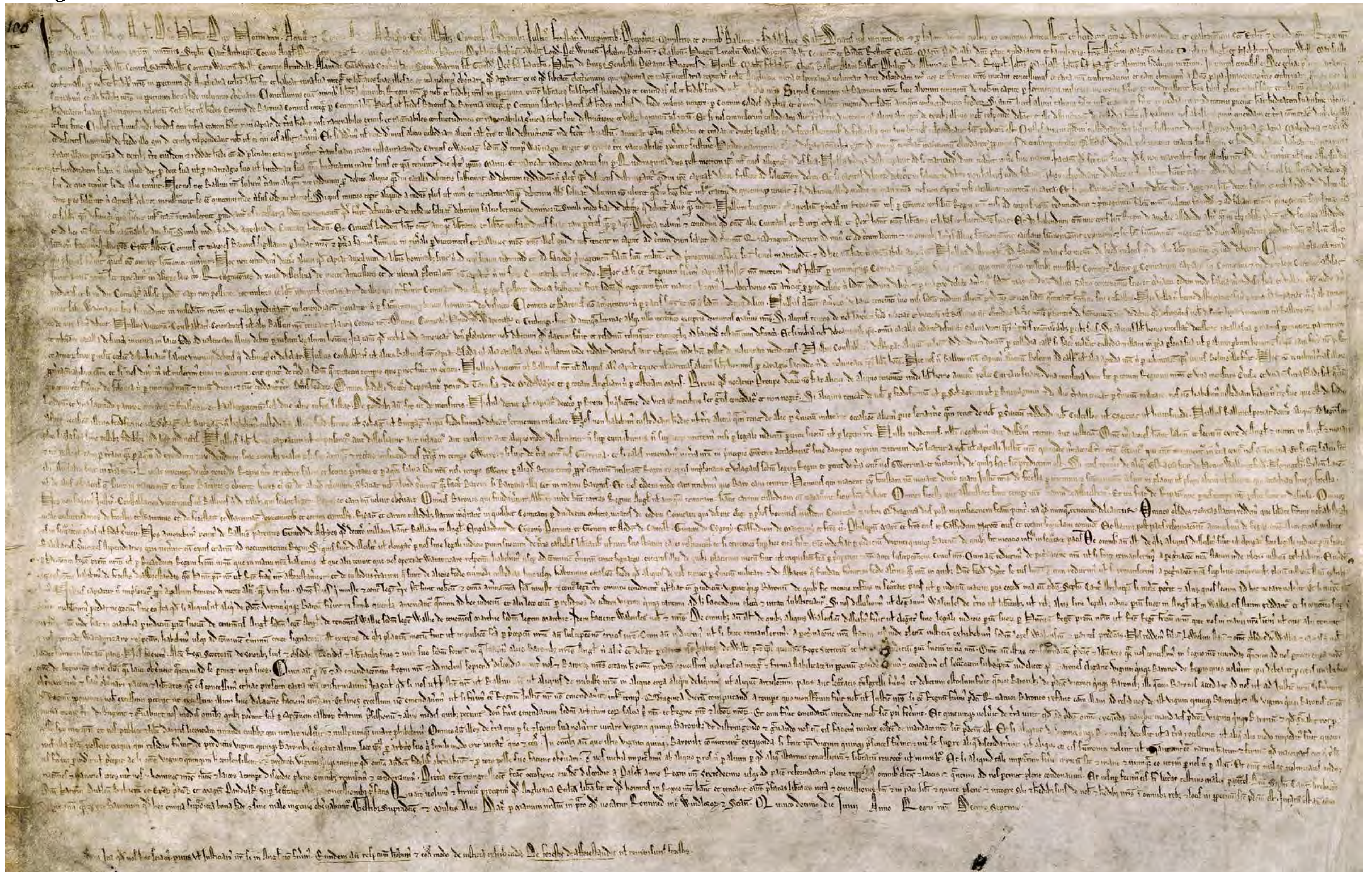
Cities: Shanghai, Beijing, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Shenzhen
Languages: Standard Chinese (or Mandarin), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages (ethnic groups)

Ethnic groups: Han Chinese (91.6%), Zhuang (1.3%), Manchu, Uighur, Hui, Miao, Yi, Tibetan, Dong, Buyei, Yao, Bai, Kazakh, Korean, Mongol and others (7.1%)
Religions: Buddhist (18.2%), Christian (5.1%), Muslim (1.8%), folk religion (21.8%), unaffiliated (52%)

Export partners: U.S., Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea
Import partners: South Korea, Japan, U.S., Taiwan, Germany, Australia
Currency: Renminbi (yuan)
Internet country code: .cn

* The CIA World Factbook

Magna Carta in China



One of four surviving copies of the 1215 Magna Carta. This copy is one of two held at the British Library. It came from the collection of Sir Robert Cotton, who died in 1631. In 1731, a fire at Ashburnham House in Westminster, where his library was then housed, destroyed or damaged many of the rare manuscripts, which is why this copy is burnt.

Photo by James Joel

11 of 21



Magna Carta in China

By Alisa Modica, vice consul, U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou, China

“To none will we sell, to none will we deny, to none will we delay right or justice.”

These words are from the Magna Carta, the historic British document that some see as inspiring the rise of individual liberties over the past 800 years. By signing it in 1215, England’s King John gave in to powerful barons who wished to curtail his power. It did so by calling for trial by one’s peers and, an end to arbitrary taxation, aspects taken to heart by America’s Founding Fathers in drafting the Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

On Oct. 19–20, one of the four surviving versions of the 1217 Magna Carta revision was displayed in the visa hall of U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou, attended by thousands of Chinese visitors. Guangzhou was one stop on the document’s 65,000-mile journey across seven countries, including the cities of Beijing and Shanghai.

It came to be at the Consulate General Guangzhou after a Chinese landmark in Guangzhou declined to display the document, leaving the British without a venue just three weeks before the show. At the end of September, their consulate

in Guangzhou asked the U.S. Consulate General for assistance. Since Guangzhou’s visa hall hosts several thousand visa applicants per day, it had enough room for visitors to an exhibit of this magnitude, and Consul General Chuck Bennett agreed to partner with his British counterpart by converting the space to showcase the document.

Visa operations were canceled for the two-day display, and a flurry of planning began regarding such matters as security requirements. The Magna Carta had to be under 24-hour line-of-sight watch; post’s regional security officers spent six straight days and nights on guard. In the end, the visa area, Lincoln Hall, was transformed into a museum with 19 display panels describing the document’s history and importance and a massive tent to display the Magna Carta and the King’s Writ, a note from 1215 announcing the document’s signing.

A week before the Magna Carta went on display in Guangzhou, international media reports surfaced that the planned location for the Beijing viewing, a Chinese

university, would no longer host the document. The British Embassy in Beijing had to move the event to their ambassador’s residence at the last minute, limiting the number of visitors. By hosting a public viewing at the U.S. consulate, Guangzhou not only demonstrated the close ties and shared political history between the U.S. and the U.K., but also provided a venue for more Chinese visitors to see the politically sensitive document. The position of the Chinese government is underscored by the fact that searches for “Magna Carta” are blocked on Sina Weibo, China’s version of Twitter.

During its run, the Guangzhou exhibit hosted more than 4,000 visitors, mostly Chinese citizens. Crowds clustered around Canon Chancellor Christopher Pullin of England’s Hereford Cathedral, where the documents are otherwise housed, to ask which clauses were still in effect and debate the principles of limited government. In the final hour before the public viewing concluded, nearly 400 Chinese elementary school children entered the hall, scribbling notes. Several



Consul General Charles “Chuck” Bennett, center, hosts a reception for the Magna Carta exhibit in Lincoln Hall, the consular waiting room for visa applicants.

State Department Photo

asked: “Why is it in Latin? Don’t British people speak English?” In total, more than 80 consulate staff members helped with the viewing and its follow-on reception, including setup, security, museum guides and interpreters.

A full 250 guests attended the reception to honor the Magna Carta’s 800th anniversary. British Consul General Matthew Rous thanked the Americans for hosting, and Consul General Bennett spoke of how America owes a debt to the Magna Carta’s architects. “For the United States, the Magna Carta remains a greatly respected symbol of independence, civil liberty and rule of law, and is considered the catalyst for the development of our system of governance,” he observed. ■



Pie Fight!

Consulate Cleverly
Promotes Morale



By Teresa Chang, vice consul,
U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai

Not every post chooses to celebrate success by throwing pies at colleagues, but in August the consular team of 49 direct hire Americans and 73 Locally Employed (LE) staff at the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai celebrated the more than 700,000 visa applications it processed in one fiscal year by doing just that.

The activity was just one of several over the course of 2015 to boost the section's morale. This spring, Shanghai, like all other posts in Mission China, experienced an unprecedented surge in visa demand following the announcement that the United States and China would mutually extend visa validity for tourists and business travelers to 10 years and students to five years. Managers and line officers thus worried about productivity, officer exhaustion and the risk of burnout.

The consular section began implementing team-oriented ideas offered by staff to promote a positive work environment, raise morale and inspire workers. These ideas helped the consular staff bond, celebrate victories and keep positive attitudes as workloads grew to new highs.

One idea was Team Theme Fridays, where each week consular employees could dress according to themes, including Sports Madness, Hipster Plaid, Mix & Match Twins and even Shark Week. Besides being an entertaining morale booster, they allowed for discussion of cultural topics. Casual attire was also permitted on administrative days, when the section was closed to the public, a favorite with all.

There was also the section's Happy Hour Team, which funded surprise events during the workday throughout the summer, providing snacks, candy, popsicles and other treats. Cultural exchanges arose as LE staff sampled such American treats as cinnamon rolls, otter pops and gummy bears, while American officers partook in Chinese specialties, like bubble milk tea.

The section also ran a design contest for a T-shirt representing how Shanghai survived the summer visa rush, with officers and LE staff providing, and all staff gaining, a chance to step outside the strict regulatory standards of their daily tasks. The winning designers received free T-shirts.



Deputy NIV Manager Carlton Benson receives his first pie of the day.

Photo by Peiqi Meng



To help recognize superior employee performance, the section established an “Awesome Box” where anonymous praise could be submitted for anyone in the section, including the 71 TDY employees who came through Shanghai during the summer. Officers and LE staff submitted more than 80 “moments of awesome,” which were read publicly during Happy Hour events and posted in the break room. All employees saw a positive effect on morale that encouraged colleagues to go above and beyond their regular responsibilities.

Beyond morale boosting, the consular section held a friendly competition to raise money and awareness for the FSN Emergency Relief Fund. Its “Fund the Fund” competition had four teams, each composed of co-workers, and its monetary goals were matched by consular managers. As an incentive, as fundraising benchmarks were met, staff earned the “right to pie” a member of the consular management team: the equivalent of \$158 for deputy managers, \$473 for the ACS/NIV chief, \$631 for the consular chief and \$789 for CG Hanscom Smith. The team that raised the most money also won a celebratory team lunch with him.

In the end, the section raised the equivalent of \$2,374 for the fund, more than three times the goal.

At a Sept. 4 barbecue with the consular information and appointments services provider and contract greeters, consular staff learned the fundraising results and the winning team. And, after a full morning interviewing 2,000 applicants, 12 LE staff and four officers who had been randomly selected got the chance to throw whipped-cream pies in the faces of the CG and consular managers.

By using innovations and staff suggestions, Consulate Shanghai learned that maintaining high productivity and meeting challenging work demands go hand in hand with a focus on morale and friendly competition. ■



Top: The Shanghai consular team poses for a photo.
Photo by Peiqi Meng



Below: Consular Chief Jewell Evans is all smiles after getting pie-ed.
Photo by Peiqi Meng



LOCAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Post promotes Roma integration in Slovakia



By Richard Fitzmaurice, acting political-economic chief, U.S. Embassy in Bratislava

The Roma, once known by the now-pejorative term of “gypsies,” constitute Slovakia’s largest and fastest-growing minority group but face widespread discrimination in employment, housing and education.

There are, however, examples of successful Roma integration efforts at the nation’s local level. During a recent visit to Eastern Slovakia, embassy officers led by former Chargé d’Affaires Rudolf Perina observed how one mayor created jobs for his Romani constituents.





Chargé d’Affaires Perina meets with students and parents outside the Roma Learning Center in Vtackovce.
Photo by Natalia Pindrochova

They also donated Fire Web-enabled tablets to a Roma education center in Vtackovce and visited the local Romani community in Moldava nad Bodvou, the site of a major police raid a few years ago.

Roma integration efforts can succeed where political will exists. The embassy aims to share these successes with a broader audience to challenge the prejudices of the nation’s majority population.

Estimates for the number of Roma in Slovakia range from 100,000 to 500,000, and some experts believe they are Slovakia’s fastest-growing ethnic group. About half of Slovakia’s Romani population resides in socially marginalized communities, often in deplorable conditions. Widespread discrimination against Roma continues in employment, housing, education and health care, and in commercial services, including restaurants and public transportation. Employers often refuse to hire Roma, and in many marginalized communities, high unemployment rates are common.

In the town of Spissky Hrhov, Perina met with Mayor Vladimir Ledecsky, who established a local program to employ long-term unemployed Roma to produce crafts for the local tourist industry. He also secured funding from the European Union to hire Roma to build sewage and gas lines in the town, showcasing how Roma can contribute to the town’s development. Ledecsky gave visiting embassy staff a tour of new homes constructed by Romani employees of his program, which provides the Roma with the material and time off to build the houses. Over the years, Ledecsky has become one of the country’s most prominent proponents of Roma integration and regularly





Chargé d'Affaires Perina greets Lunik IX residents..

Photo by Natalia Pindrochova

shares his expertise with other Slovak mayors through conferences and publications.

The situation is less optimistic in other communities in eastern Slovakia, where local authorities have forcibly evicted Romani inhabitants, demolished their housing or blocked them from obtaining construction permits or purchasing land. In the Lunik IX neighborhood of Kosice, one of Slovakia's largest marginalized Romani communities, the municipality has demolished several large apartment buildings, forcing more than 200 people to seek shelter in an improvised settlement in a nearby forest. Many local residents claim the government already does too much to help Roma at the expense of the majority population, providing elected officials little incentive to intervene.

Equally troubling, Romani communities in eastern Slovakia have been the target of police raids in recent years. The Slovak Human Rights Ombudswoman said there was excessive use of force, intimidation and property damage by masked police during their raid on the Romani settlement in Moldava nad Bodvou in June 2013. During the embassy officials' visit to the town, the mayor accepted Perina's invitation to visit the Romani settlement and watch a performance by a local Romani theater. A civic activist who is Embassy Bratislava's 2015 Woman of Courage awardee formed the group. The mayor, who had only limited contact with Roma since his 2014 election, was moved by the performance, which told the story of a young Roma boy who becomes addicted to inhalants while trying to alleviate his hunger. Afterward, the mayor agreed to revive the "Moldava Together" musical festival, which brings together Romani and non-Romani residents to





Chargé d'Affaires Perina, left, shakes hands with Spissky Hrhov Mayor Vladimir Ledecsky, right.

Photo by Natalia Pindrochova

enhance mutual understanding, but which was canceled by the previous mayor.

The lack of educational opportunities for Roma remains at the heart of their marginalization. Romani children are disproportionately enrolled in so-called “special” schools for children with mental disabilities, which largely prevents them from attending secondary school. NGOs have filled the breach by running educational programs through community centers to reduce the number of Romani children enrolled in special schools. In the village of Vtackovce, the embassy team visited a center that tutors young Romani students to help them succeed in mainstream schools and works with their parents to stress the importance of education. Perina donated 20 Kindle Fire tablets to the center to improve the reading skills of young Roma and teach them how to use the Internet as an educational tool.

The embassy has also been supporting the efforts of a Romani NGO to work with Ministry of Education school inspectors, who identify segregation in Slovak schools, on developing new protocols to rectify instances of segregation.

While Roma in eastern Slovakia continue to face widespread discrimination and prejudice, where the local political will exists—as in Spissky Hrhov and Vtackovce—Roma integration efforts can succeed. The embassy continues to highlight successful Roma integration efforts and support programs challenging prejudice, and urges host-nation officials to take additional steps to fight discrimination. ■

DIPLOMAT'S HOMECOMING

Ambassador visits where dad was COM 50 years ago

By Charles H. Rivkin, assistant secretary for economic and business affairs



At the U.S. Embassy in Dakar, Rivkin stands beside a photo of his father, William R. Rivkin, who passed away in 1967 while serving as U.S. ambassador to Senegal and The Gambia.

Photo by Embassy Dakar

In my work with colleagues, I regularly see the personal impact of diplomacy. A recent trip to Senegal and Nigeria brought this home to me in a very fundamental way.

First, some background: My bureau supports entrepreneurs worldwide to shape new futures for themselves and their economies, negotiates the open skies agreements that create vibrant links between cities and builds new relationships among people in business, the arts, academia and throughout society. We're leveling the playing field and opening global markets for American businesses daily.

My trip to Senegal and Nigeria was to underscore this region's vital role in Africa's transformation as a new center of global growth. In Senegal, I met with government officials and talked to key audiences to signal our support for economic reforms, infrastructural development and other efforts to attract private investment that are in the country's economic blueprint, the Plan Sénégal Emergent.

I was also returning to a land where, in the late 1960s, my father once served as U.S. ambassador. I was a small child living in the chief of mission's residence in Dakar, mindful as he undertook his official duties and absorbing the impact of a new country and culture.



Even though I was very young, I have vivid memories of so many things. Everything seemed to tower above me, from the palms to the ant hills to the enormous baobab trees, which seemed almost magical in appearance.

I recall the rudimentary fishing boats, known as pirogues, that we used to take across the water to a small island known as Ile de N’Gor. I remember watching the sunsets that bathed the Pointe des Almadies in such resplendent light. I also recall how humbled and honored we felt as a family when a local chieftain came to present us with a goat. This gift came at considerable personal expense for him, and I have never forgotten such a powerful gesture.

But there was something even more poignant about Senegal for me. It marked my father’s final tour. While serving as ambassador, he passed away in the official residence when he was only 48 years old.

As I prepared for my latest Africa trip, I wanted to revisit some of the places that had come to mean so much to me. So with the help of the Embassy Dakar team, led by Ambassador Zumwalt, I went to the site of the residence that was once our home. We arrived only to find that it had been razed to make way for a new building that now houses the prime minister of Senegal. I could only peer through the gates.

Of course, the island of N’Gor hadn’t disappeared, so we took a drive there. Instead of a pirogue, we took a motor launch to the island (a move the embassy team deemed safer).

N’Gor was as small as I remembered. But times had changed—and for the better. Instead of being the destination for diplomats and other elite, it had become an island for everyone. We found ourselves on a beach filled with Senegalese people from all walks of life, picnicking, swimming, playing music and even forming drum circles.

Walking through narrow lanes between houses, we eventually came upon the house that used to serve as a weekend getaway for my family. It was a small building with just two rooms, as well as a sink and bathroom.

We used to swim there from a sandy beach and have



Rivkin stands in front of a Baobab tree near the presidential palace in Dakar. The tree is believed to be more than 1,000 years old.

Photo by Jonathan Scott



Rivkin fondly recalled visiting Île de Ngor (pictured above) with his family.

Photo by ManuB



barbecues. But the beach had disappeared entirely and all that greeted me was a rocky area at the water's edge. The majestic view of the Atlantic was exactly how I remembered it, however.

As we returned from that house on Ngor, I felt a certain satisfaction. We all revisit places that were once meaningful to us, and build them up in our minds over the years. Inevitably, there are changes to those places that do not fit in with the halcyon images we remember, and we must reconcile the differences.

In the end, I saw only fleeting evidence of the images that I had held since childhood: The baobabs, for example, were as big and wide as I remembered.

But the visit was rewarding in other ways. For one thing, my father considered public service to be among the highest of callings. I was now—figuratively and diplomatically—following in his footsteps.

In every meeting or interview in which I participated, and in every speech I delivered, I felt a special connection to him, as I continued the work to which he had been so dedicated: supporting Senegal's efforts to grow its economy and create new horizons for its people.

In a speech before the chamber of commerce, I spoke in French of my personal experiences as an American child growing up in Dakar and my appreciation for Senegalese culture. I wove the recollections into my main message: the importance of creating business-friendly climates that support entrepreneurs, attract foreign investors and stimulate economic growth.

And on that warm day, economic diplomacy became truly personal and, I hope, effective.

I believe my father would have been proud to attend that event and to witness the embassy's work to support this exciting new chapter in Senegal's story. I'm prouder still because I firmly believe that, by working together, and supporting Senegal on the promising course it has set, we can watch economic opportunity grow as broadly as the baobab trees that impressed me so much as a child. ■



Rivkin stands at the "Door of No Return" at the Maison des Esclaves (House of Slaves) on Gorée Island. Now a museum, the house was once the last place slaves were held before being sent to North America.

Photo by Jonathan Scott





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**U.S. pavilion at Expo Milan
ends on high note**

By Christopher Wurst, public affairs officer, U.S. Consulate General Milan

The USA Pavilion (USAP) at Expo Milan 2015, one of this year's greatest public diplomacy opportunities in Europe and a legacy project for U.S. Mission Italy, has exceeded its expectations. The event, which ran May 1 through Oct. 31, including a midsummer heat wave, drew 21 million visitors, more than 6 million of them stopping by USAP.

USAP, with its theme of "American Food 2.0: United to Feed the Planet," was frequently praised by

visitors as fun and substantive. It was also Expo's most popular pavilion, attracting more visitors than any other national pavilion. This world's fair will be remembered for many things, but it is impossible to imagine it without the impressive American presence.

Dubbed the "intellectual pavilion," USAP served as a platform for issues raised by Expo's theme: Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life. USAP addressed U.S. policies, innovation and leadership on food secu-

rity, sustainability, food production and distribution, mitigating food waste, clean water and other topics.

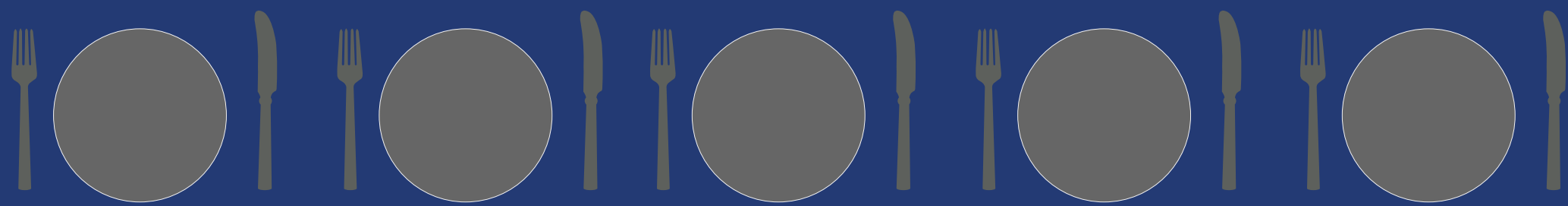
Its rooftop featured more than 100 "Terrace Talks" and, in Expo-hosted symposia, American scholars, scientists, government experts, chefs and astronauts spoke on technology solutions for feeding 9 billion people by 2050.

The Pavilion's fun derived in part from the energy of the 120 multilingual U.S. Student Ambassadors, who got involved in impromptu dance



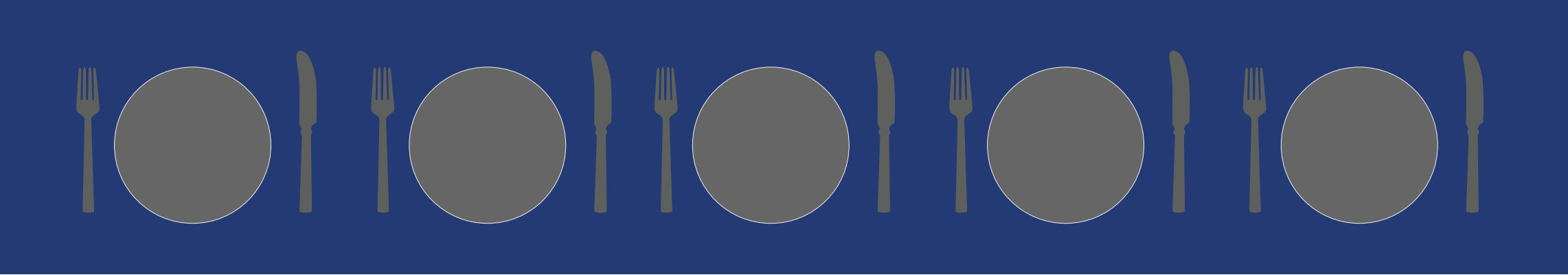
The exterior of the USA Pavilion emphasized the food theme. *Photo by Carilyn Brosious*





Pride Week supporters wave in June in front of the USA Pavilion during the Expo Pride Week kick-off event, the first time LGBT rights were directly addressed at a World's Fair.
Photo by Alice Redaelli





parties, flash mobs, an a cappella choir, and the Expo's fashion shows and sporting events. The USAP also held the first LGBT Pride event held at a world's fair, an all-day celebration featuring a who's who of Italian politicians and activists.

As part of Milan's parallel "Expo in the City" series during the same period, the post's public affairs section oversaw a seven-month series of classic food films, from "Big Night" to "Chef," and hosted more than a dozen lectures examining numerous elements of American culture.

The 42,000-square-foot USAP was designed by Architect Jim Biber using an open plan inspired by American barns, with space for multitudes of visitors without long lines. Entering by a ramp crafted from wood salvaged from the Coney Island Boardwalk, visitors were greeted by a huge video of President Obama and a series of installations about U.S. food and sustainability efforts.

The Pavilion featured one of the largest vertical farms ever built; one entire three-story side of USAP was full of American heirloom vegetables, fruits and herbs, and was praised by first lady Michelle Obama, who noted that such in-

novation could help solve hunger and nutrition issues in the United States. The Pavilion's expansive rooftop looked out over the 500-acre Expo site and became a popular meeting place for visitors. A series of short, animated films called "the Great American Foodscape" taught visitors about American food traditions and current innovations.

Adjacent to the pavilion, a group of food trucks, Food Truck Nation, served American classics, from cheeseburgers to cheesecake, and promoted U.S. travel destinations. The Maine lobster roll took the top prize and endorsement from the largest newspaper in Italy as "the coolest food at Expo."

At the iconic Galleria in downtown Milan, the James Beard American Restaurant (JBAR) was a six-month pop-up center of "food as performance." In a model of culinary diplomacy, dozens of America's best chefs offered multicourse menus of American cuisine, changing for many the way they perceived American food.

These chefs and concepts were provided by the Friends of the USA Pavilion, a consortium of

the International Culinary Institute, the James Beard Foundation and the American Chamber of Commerce in Italy, led by USAP Commissioner General Doug Hickey. They built and managed the USAP, Food Truck Nation, JBAR, an event space called Casa America and a food innovation program called "Feeding the Accelerator," raising all the money to mount this effort. (U.S. law bans public expenditure on world expositions.)

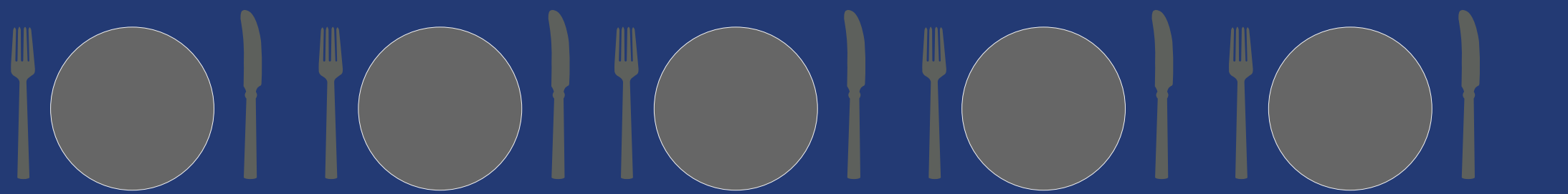
The Friends worked closely with Department officials, including Ambassador David Thorne (senior adviser to Secretary Kerry), Expo lead Bea Camp (in Washington),



U.S. Ambassador to Italy John Phillips, left, and USA Pavilion Commissioner General Douglas Hickey cut the ribbon to open the pavilion May 1.

Photo by Christopher Wurst





First Lady Michelle Obama meets in June with Student Ambassadors at the USA Pavilion. From left are Ambassador to Italy John Phillips; co-CEO of Sweetgreen Nicholas Jammet; "The Chew" co-host Carla Hall; former NBA great Alonzo Mourning; USA Pavilion Commissioner General Douglas Hickey; and author/restaurateur/"The Chew" co-host Mario Batali.
Photo by Daniel Peaslee





U.S. Ambassador to Italy John Phillips, Ambassador Philip Reeker (consul general in Milan) and the consulate staff (led by Deputy Expo Commissioner General Elia Tello, an FSO). ConGen Milan's workload increased exponentially in the run-up to and throughout Expo, but a stream of TDY employees and interns helped to oversee visits from more than 600 experts and world dignitaries, including Secretary Kerry, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, numerous CODELs and first lady Michelle Obama. Italian media said the first lady's visit was the single most talked about event at the Expo.

Of the Expo's food-centric theme, Michelle Obama said, "We know we can fix these problems, and that's why it's so important for all to be here at this Expo, sharing these ideas with the world, learning from each other, celebrating the advancements that we've made."

Secretary Kerry also offered strong and consistent support, cheering on the Milan groundbreaking via satellite and, 15 months later, visiting and delivering



Secretary of State John Kerry speaks at Expo Milan 2015 in October.

Photo by Alessandro Corradini

a major address on climate and food security during World Food Week. Besides the Department's involvement, which included USUN, the U.S. agencies engaged with USAP included USAID, NASA, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Commerce, all reflecting broad U.S. support for the Expo's themes.

The consulate's commercial section played a key role, too, organizing trade missions for high-level delegations, coordinating tourism events for U.S. states featured at Food Truck Nation and helping USAP obtain U.S.-made security screening equipment and building materials.

Media statistics show USAP's broad reach: It was mentioned in



at least a thousand media stories—whose reach through targeted social media was close to a billion.

As the Expo's dust settles, those involved with USAP can take satisfaction in its role in the global

conversation about how to feed 9 billion people by 2050. Active U.S. participation at this world's fair reminded the world that the U.S. is a leading force in overcoming this challenge. As a sign at the ever-pop-

ular “selfie station” located in front of the USAP put it: “I am one in nine billion.”

In the end there was no doubt: Our participation was essential. ■



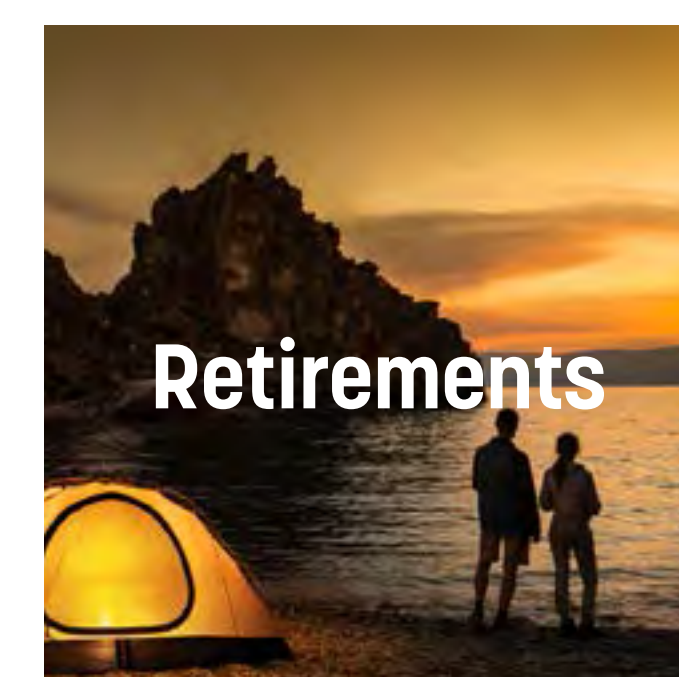
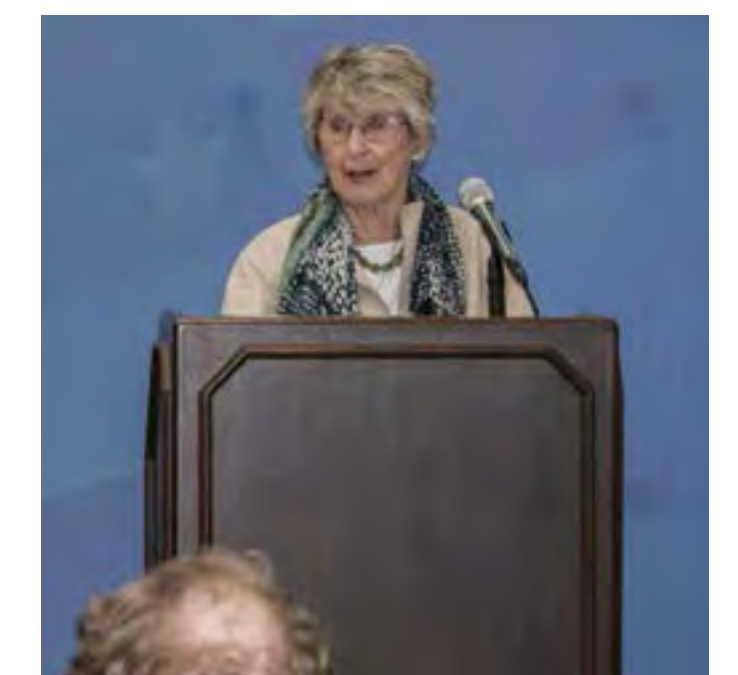
Secretary of State John Kerry tours the USA Pavilion with Commissioner General Douglas Hickey.

Photo by Alessandro Corradini

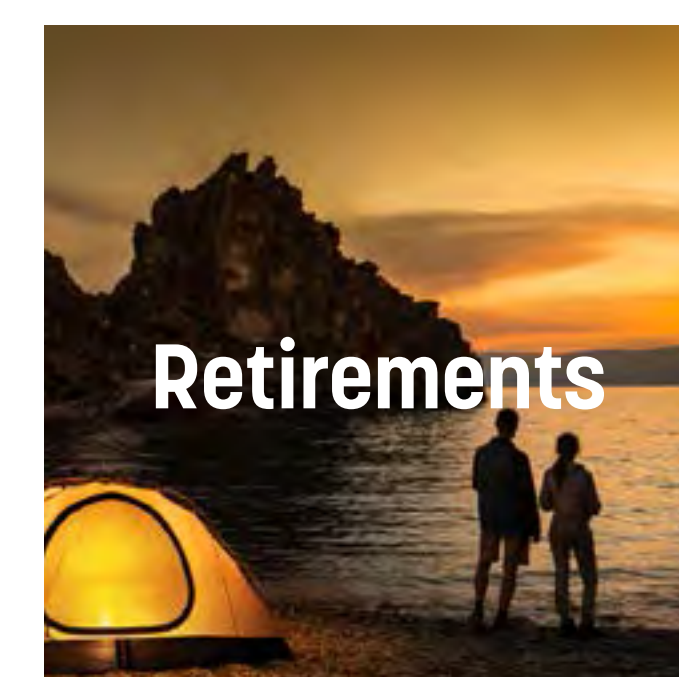
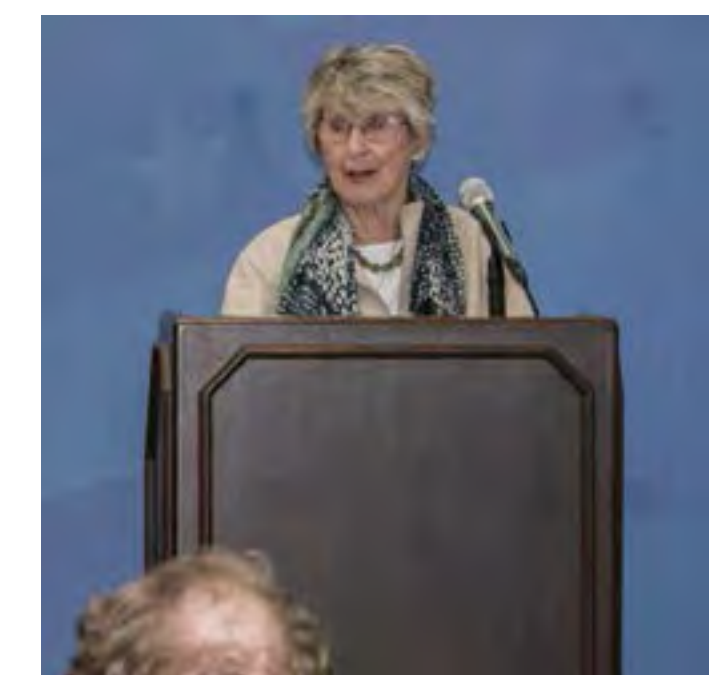
Avis Bohlen Speaks at Library



Retired Ambassador Avis Bohlen shares an anecdote from a memoir by Charles Thayer of his time at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in the 1930s with a Bunche Library audience. She said Thayer subsequently became a victim of the 1950s anti-Communist witchhunt, and that her father's 1953 appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union was conditioned on Thayer resigning from the Foreign Service. Bohlen has written a foreword to a new edition of Thayer's 1951 classic book on the early years of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy, "Bears in the Caviar." ■ *Photo by Ed Warner*



Embassy Holds Hispanic-American Event



Pol/mil Officer David Rodriguez reads a poem by Dominican-American writer Julia Alvarez at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo's Hispanic-American event, "Raise Your Voice." The event was organized by Hispanic-American officers at post and held at the American Center Japan on Oct. 6. ■

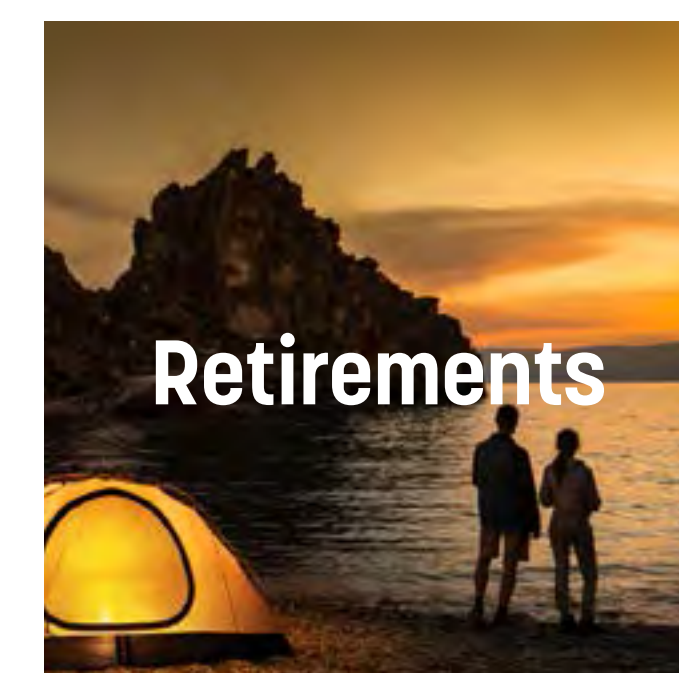
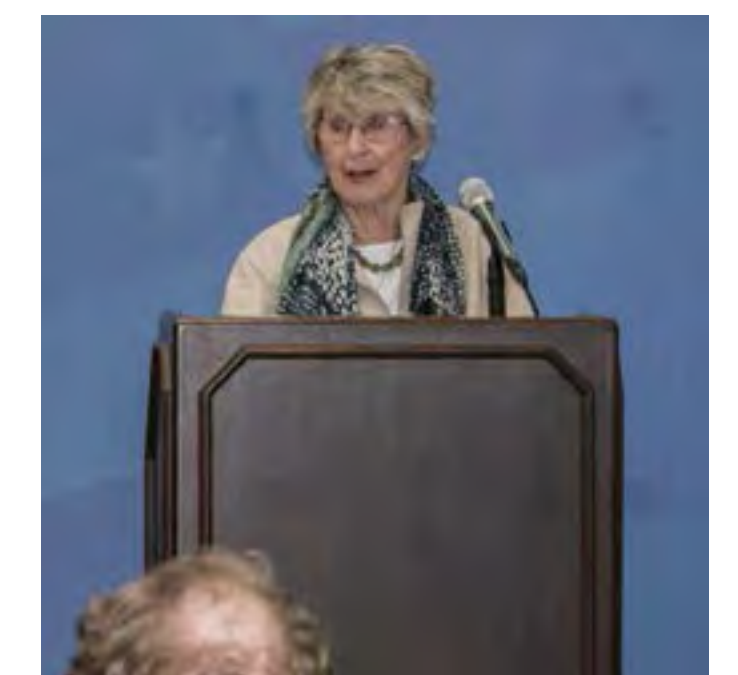
Photo by Yoshie Kosugi

Retirements

Ethics Answers



Magazine Says DOS Great Place to Work



The program at the awards event for the November edition of Washingtonian magazine, which named the Department of State one of the 50 Great Places to Work for 2015, one of only five federal agencies to earn this distinction. Key attractions were said to be the opportunity to travel and the Department's Student Loan Repayment Program. Federal agencies were chosen with the help of a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that considered employee satisfaction and commitment. ■ *Photo courtesy of Washington Board of Trade*

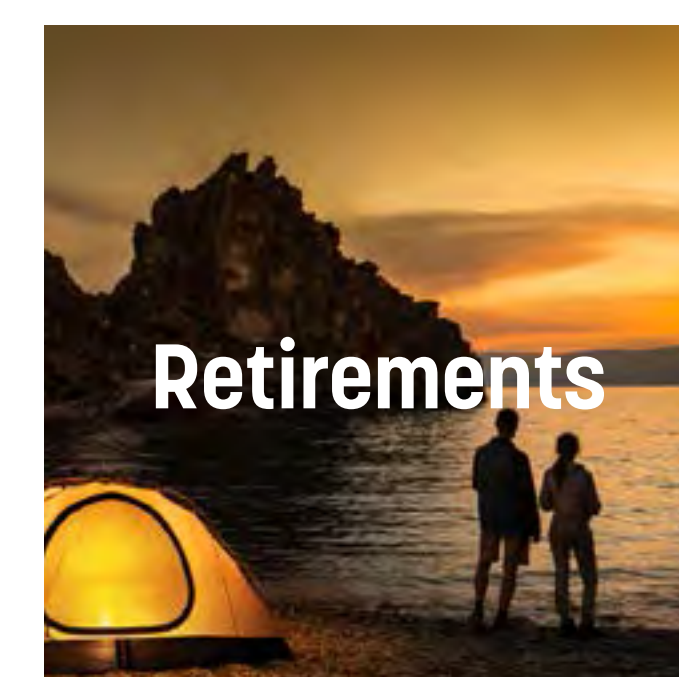
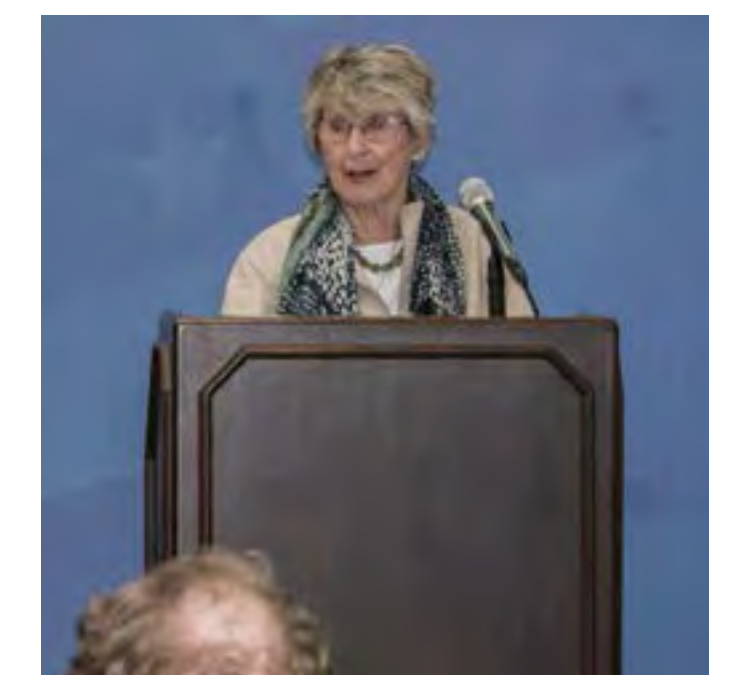


Entertainers Delight at Embassy



Ambassador Eunice Reddick poses with members of the Armed Forces entertainment group Damsels and Cowgirls, which gave a country and western music performance and demonstrated rodeo roping for an audience at the U.S. Embassy Niamey. The audience included members of the military, diplomats, Nigeriens and members of the American school community. Shown from left are Keenie Word and Aubree Bollock of the Damsels, Reddick, and Cowgirls Chenae Shiner-Vest, Trisha Shields and Jenna Smeenck. ■

Photo by Sonny John Padula



Retirements

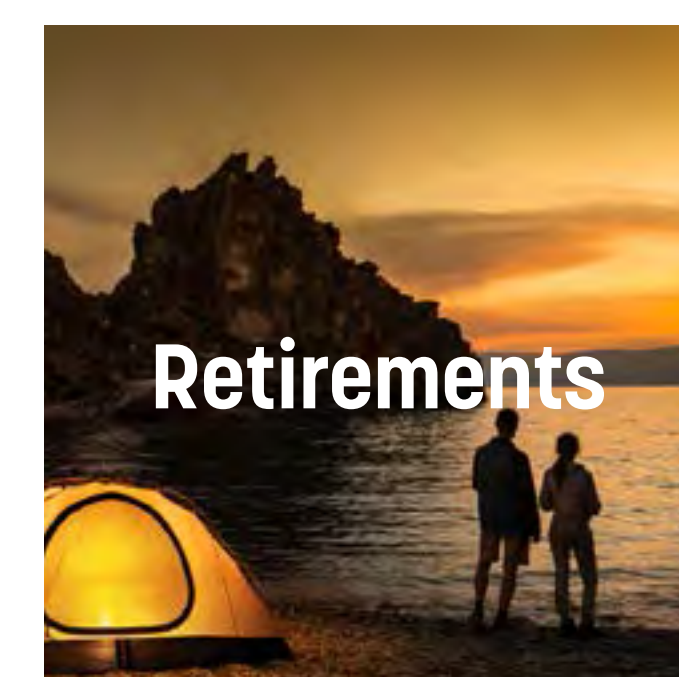
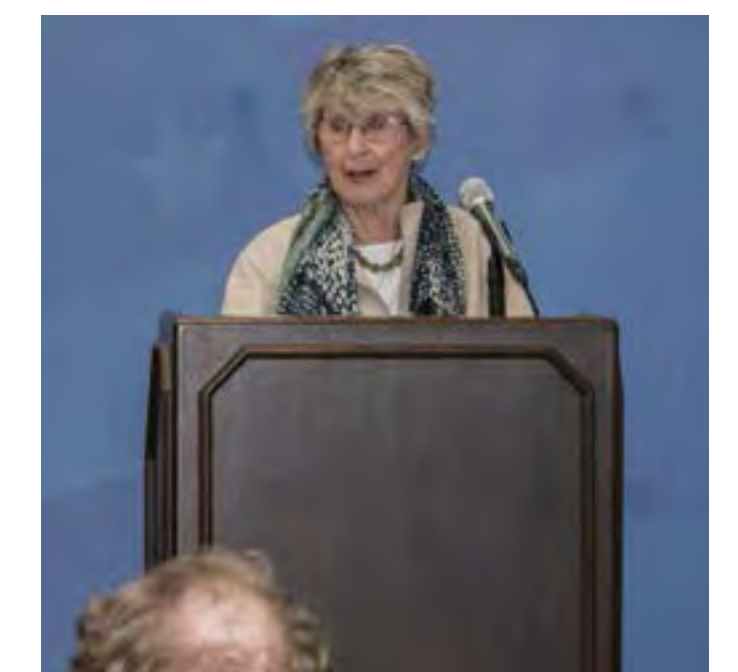
Ethics Answers



CFC Holds Fun Run in DC



Department employees walk past the Kennedy Center during an HR/ER/WLD-sponsored fun run/walk event Oct. 15. Approximately 100 runners and walkers participated and contributed \$785 to the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the national capital area. By mid-November, the Department's CFC effort had raised \$317,000. Employees can contribute to the campaign, which ends on Dec.15, at <https://www.employeeexpress.gov/>. ■ *Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco*



Retirements

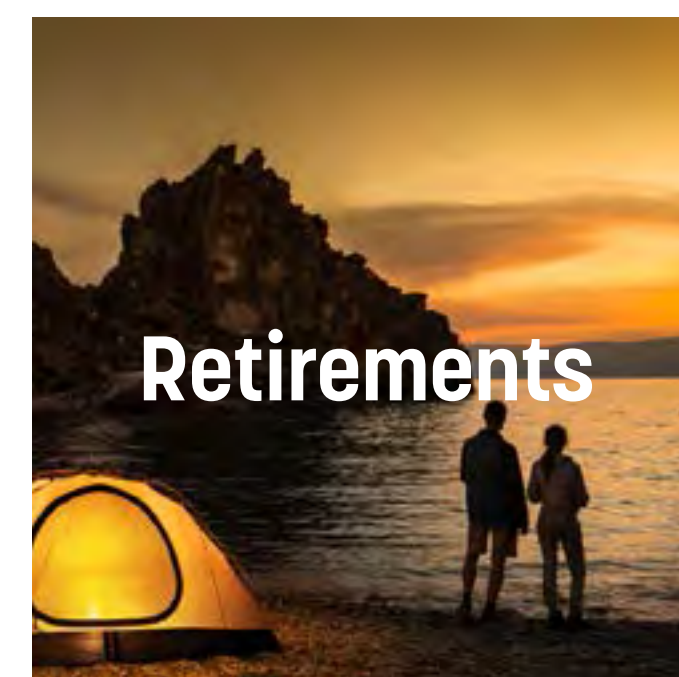
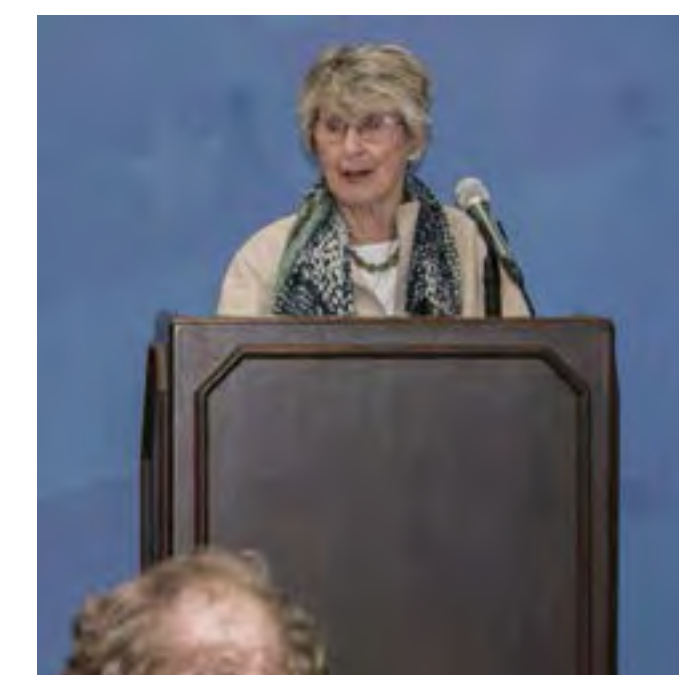
Ethics Answers



—2015— FEDERAL BENEFITS OPEN SEASON Nov. 9 — Dec. 14, 2015



The Federal Benefits Open Season ends Dec. 14. During the period, employees may enroll in, change or cancel an existing enrollment in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program and the Flexible Spending Account Program. They may do so via www.opm.gov/opensession. ■



Retirements



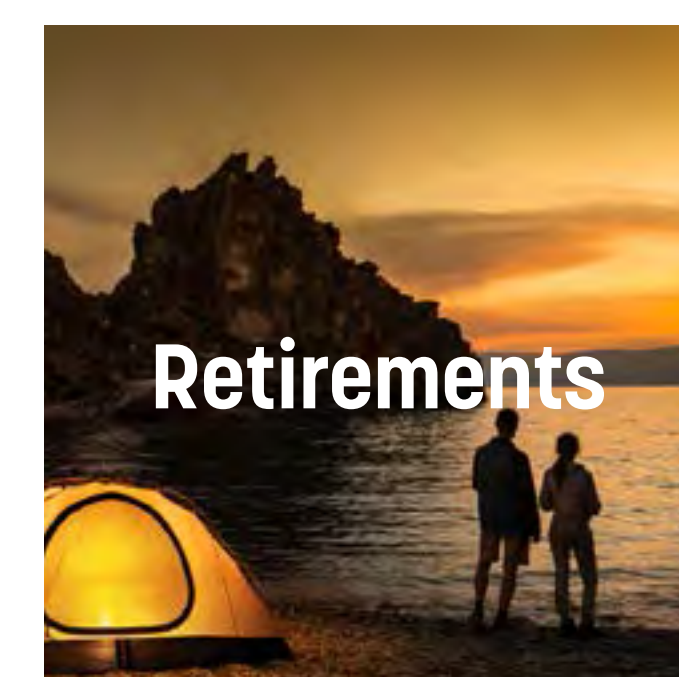
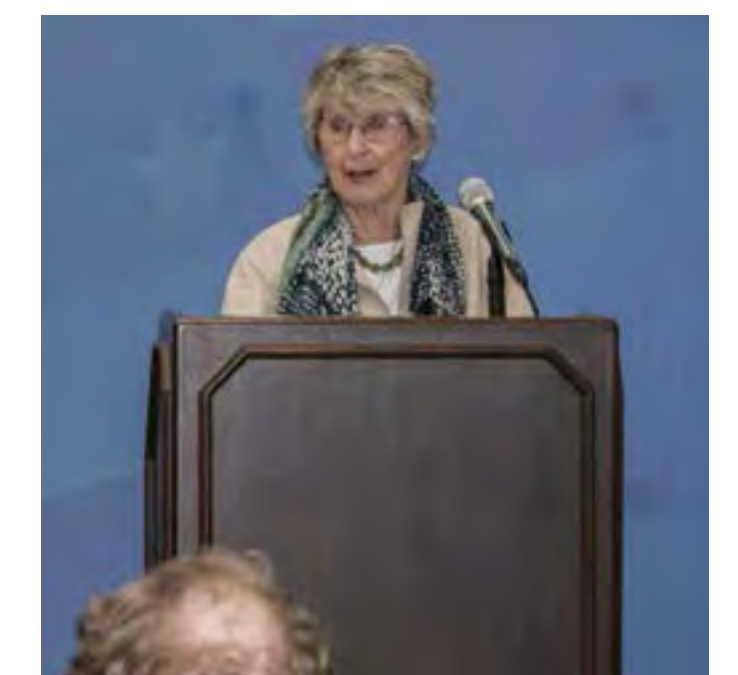
Ethics Answers



Avis Bohlen Speaks at Library



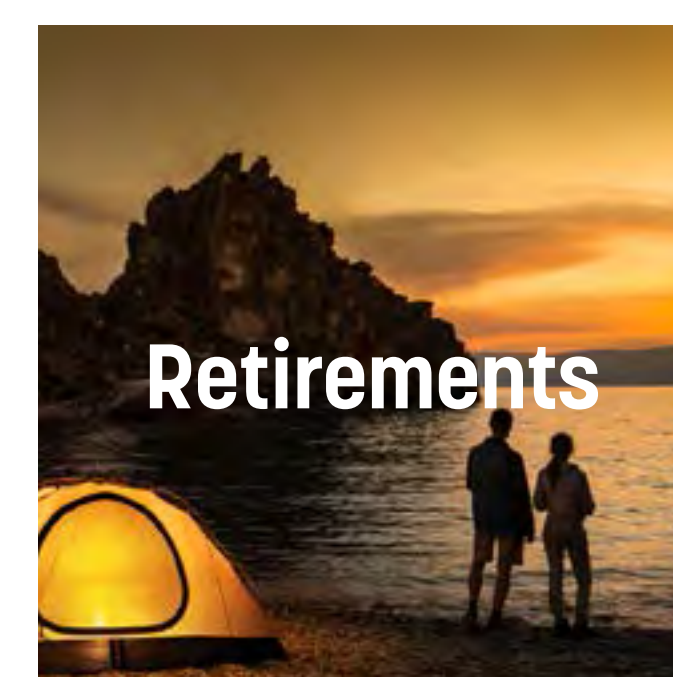
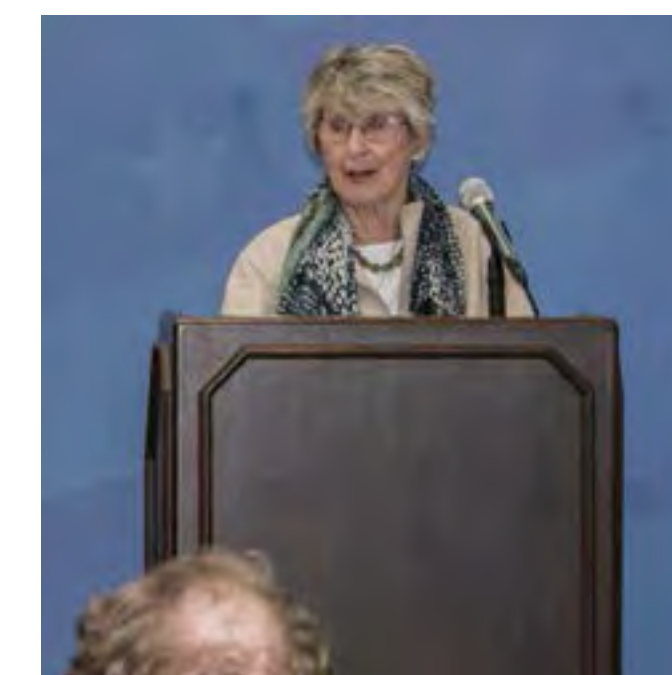
Retired Ambassador Avis Bohlen shares an anecdote from a memoir by Charles Thayer of his time at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in the 1930s with a Bunche Library audience. She said Thayer subsequently became a victim of the 1950s anti-Communist witchhunt, and that her father's 1953 appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union was conditioned on Thayer resigning from the Foreign Service. Bohlen has written a foreword to a new edition of Thayer's 1951 classic book on the early years of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy, "Bears in the Caviar." ■ *Photo by Ed Warner*



Q: My wife and I are both FSOs and posted in Thailand. My posting ends this year, but my wife has another year remaining. Because we want to stay together, I plan on taking leave without pay (LWOP). I would like to start applying for jobs now so that I can have something lined up for when I start my LWOP. I don't anticipate any ethical issues, as the Department won't be paying my salary while I am on LWOP. Please confirm that assumption.

A: Actually, there are a number of ethical issues to consider, because the rules will continue to apply to you while you are in LWOP status, even though you will not receive your salary and will no longer even be assigned to Thailand. For instance, if you contact any potential employer, as soon as you contact that potential employer, you must recuse yourself from any matter at post that involves or could affect that potential employer. Also, if you start working for an entity other than the U.S. government, you will be prohibited from representing that entity (or any other entity) back to the Department or any U.S. government agency. So, for example, you could not work for a contractor and represent that contractor's interests before any U.S. government entity. Remember, too, that any employment you take will be imputed to your wife, so she too will need to recuse herself from any matters at the Department that involve the entity for whom you will be working. Finally, we recommend discussing your plans with your management officer to make sure you don't come into violation of other, non-ethics-related rules.

Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov.



Retirements

Ethics Answers



Retirements

Civil Service

Blaisdell, Barbara L.
Bond, Marie A.
Burrell, John L.
Coates, Stephanie L.
Cook, Gectris D.
Curtin, Tina M.
Decquir, Margaret Harmon
Gregory, Donald Thomas
Munoz, Vicki Bulian
Paraoan, Ed A.
Reynolds, Andrew W.
Round, David A.
Scruggs III, Margurite F.
Smith, Harold
Speed, Robert K.
Toussaint, Joseph W.
Treiber, Daniel R.
Trimble, Gretchen E.
White, Robert A.
Wright, Kathryn Clark

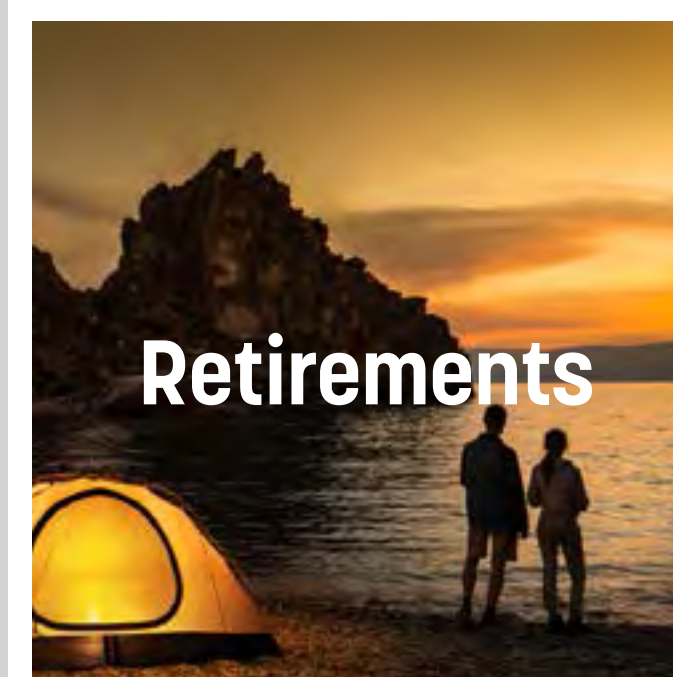
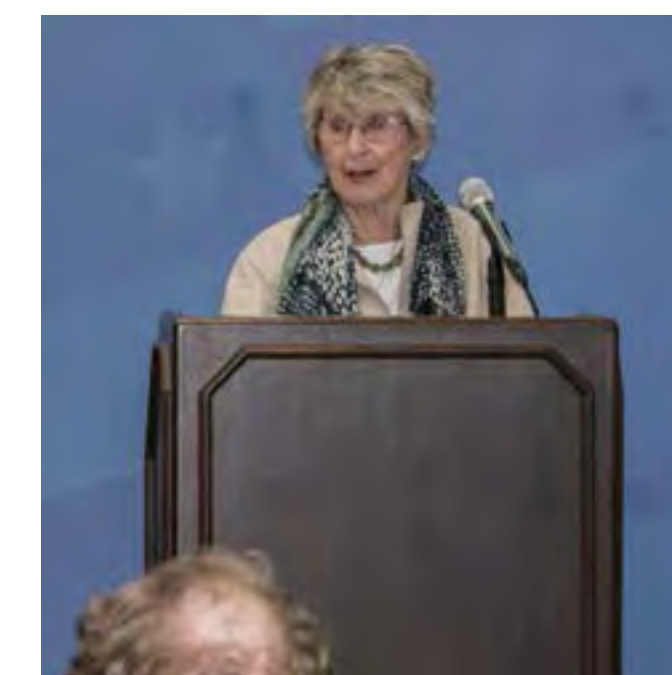
Foreign Service

Ballard, David L.
Barkley, Clare A.
Berryman, Michael D.
Betts, Howard H.
Bigus, James R.
Borden, Thurmond H.
Brown Jr., Edwin P.
Chick, Anne Louise
Clemons, Jimmy W.
Cook, Gary Lee

Dalton, Bryan W.
Day, Christina Elizabeth
Dech II, Robert W.
Deigni, Christine Rita
Delgado Jr., Gustavo
Dever, Matthew Bedford
Dong, Edward Kwok Hee
Downes, Robert R.
Edwards, Gary David
Emerick, Polly A.
Fermoile, Paul M.
Fogarty, Jeannette
Ford, Melissa G.
Fried, Daniel
Gallegos, Gonzalo R.
Grant, Julie L.
Gregory, Barbara R.
Griffin Jr., B. Glenn
Gutierrez, Karl
Hall, Ruth Mary
Haney, Barry L.
Hanlon, Carol M.
Hengel, Douglas C.
Hess, Lawrence L.
Hodgson, Sara K.
Hoffman, Mark G.
Isachsen, Melinda
Kauffman, Elizabeth Cooper
Kay, Gregory W.
Kelly, Laura L.
Kennedy, Paul W.
Kerchoff, Steven P.
Keyes III, John J.

Kingsland, Deborah Lynne
Klopfenstein, Neil R.
Kollist, Ingrid M.
Larsen, Dan Jonathan
Lehman, James A.
Lesh, William W.
Lockman, Jeri Lynn
Loh Jr., Anthony
Malcik, Susan H.
Malzahn, Karen Lee
Mathieu, Gail Dennise
Matthews, James D.
Mazel, Louis
McGehee, Scott M.
McKay, Robert L.
McNamara, John F.
McPartland, Suzanne
Milas, Kevin C.
Minsek, William R.
Mire, Lawrence J.
Moon, Patrick S.
Moore, James R.
Moore, Joann
Moore, Wendela C.
Morris, Diane Susanne
Moskowitz, Ken
Muse, Anthony
Naland, John K.
Olson, Karl Gunnar
O'Neill, Heidi E.
Paunescu, Julianne Johnson
Payne, Cheryl L.
Penner, Gary Dean

Powers, Phyllis Marie
Proctor, Thomas C.
Ramsey, Thomas Metzger
Ranneberger, Michael E.
Rector, Andrew B.
Reid, James P.
Robinson, Ronald Sinclair
Rodgers, John Robert
Root, Lance E.
Schensted, David Patrick
Schnaible, Jim W.
Schwartz, Todd P.
Shedd, Matthew A.
Sibilla, Christopher A.
Silva, Joanne Rizzo
Spilsbury, John V. G.
Stanton, Michael W.
Steakley, Mark J.
Taliaferro, William R.
Tatuch, Martin Borys
Taylor, Brooks A.
Thompson, Philip Alan
Underwood, Thomas A.
Van Der Zalm, Janet Rae
Vidal, Jesus
Wachter, Carolyn D.
Wallis, Jacob
Walls, William James
Watson, Rhonda Joyce
Wayne, Earl A.
White, Franklin E.
Williams, James L.
Wilson, Paula J.



YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT IT TOUGH? THE STATE OF HARD LUCK STORIES

TODD WINGEMORE WAS ASSIGNED TO EMBASSY ICKYSTAN BUT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PASS THE LANGUAGE TEST AFTER 27 YEARS OF CLASSES.

SO I'M THINKING NEXT TIME MAYBE SOMETHING WITHOUT SO MANY VERBS - HUNGARIAN, MAYBE?



POLITICAL OFFICER AND PERSISTENT INNOVATOR MILENA HOUNDSTOOTH CONTINUES TO SEE HER BOLD PROPOSALS REJECTED.

JAZZING UP DIPNOTES WITH EMOTICONS, RECYCLING SHREDDED DOCUMENTS INTO COZY AND CLASSIFIED SNUGGIES, A ZIPLINE FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO FOGGY BOTTOM METRO - WHEN WILL THE HATERS EMBRACE MY SASSY INSIGHTS?!?



CONSULAR OFFICER MAYNARD WHIPPLE: "THE GUY IN THE CUBICLE NEXT TO ME CHEWS WITH HIS MOUTH OPEN - JUST SUCKING ON A TIC TAC SOUNDS LIKE A CATFISH BEING CLUBBED TO DEATH!"

SMACK! SLURP! § SHLOFF!



AT NINE DIFFERENT EMBASSIES, INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICER STARLA FLICKER HAS PLACED LAST IN EVERY SINGLE CHILI COOK OFF.

MAYBE NEXT TIME MORE CUMIN AND LESS SPAM...



AMBASSADOR SPALDING BLUESTONE:

SOMETIMES THE MARGINS ON MY TALKING POINTS ARE A BIT DISPLEASING - NOT TOO WIDE OR TOO NARROW, JUST LACKING THAT AESTHETIC TINGLE OF DELIGHT...





HR REVIEWS BIDDING, ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

Story by Arnold A. Chacon,
Director General of the Foreign Service

Every year, thousands of Foreign Service employees bid on onward assignments. Many, if not most or even all FS employees, consider this a painful process, full of stress, anxiety and furious lobbying. This is not surprising: bidding and assignments are at the intersection of career moves (with all the disruptions that any physical move entails) and personal/family considerations and everything that goes with work-life wellness and cultural adjustment.

The Bureau of Human Resources (HR) is determined to make the process simpler, more transparent and less time and energy consuming. The challenges involved include the fact that the FS has grown 70 percent since 1995 and 42 percent since 2002 alone. This means more people, more positions, more locations, more competition, more complexity and more time. I am aware of what it means for employees, who've commented on bidding to me and my HR colleagues, and through the Sounding Board and/or AFSA. HR has launched a systematic review of the entirety of the bidding and assignments process: 360s/references, FSBid, the Career Development Program (CDP) and the bidding and assignments cycle.

Some changes could be relatively quick and painless, such as changing the number, distribution and characterization of bids (core, high, medium, low). Some changes, such as those affecting the CDP, have larger downstream effects. We, therefore, will survey employees on what they do and do not value from the CDP. Other reforms would require IT changes and have resource implications.

As the Secretary has said, we're going to keep investing in our people's success and we're going to invest in their capacity to be able to be successful. HR is looking at everything to make this process better for employees and to advance the Department's values, interests and goals. HR will discuss any proposals with AFSA, and aims to institute as many changes as quickly as possible so that they enhance effective selection (the right person with the right skills for the right job at the right time) through a more objective, more transparent and more efficient system. The result will be that FS employees and HR staff will spend more time and effort on building leadership capacity and professional development and less on requirements that entail box-checking and processing. There will be multiple opportunities for employees to participate in this process. Revamping the bidding and assignment process is a large part of my goal to strengthen the Department's talent base—a Foreign Service equipped for the challenges of 2025 and beyond. ■



Appointments



Carolyn Patricia Alsup
U.S. Ambassador to The
Gambia

Julie Furuta-Toy
U.S. Ambassador
to Equatorial Guinea

David R. Gilmour
U.S. Ambassador
to Togo

Dennis B. Hankins
U.S. Ambassador to
Guinea

Jeffrey J. Hawkins
U.S. Ambassador to
Central African Republic

◀ Scroll and tap image to view more ▶



Carolyn Patricia Alsup

U.S. Ambassador to The Gambia

Carolyn Patricia Alsup (SFS) of Florida is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia. Most recently, she was DCM at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana. Her previous positions include director and deputy director of the Office of Central African Affairs; career development officer in the Bureau of Human Resources; DCM in Banjul, The Gambia; executive assistant in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs; examiner at the Board of Examiners; and economics officer in the Office of Multilateral Trade Affairs. She also served tours in Mexico City and Santo Domingo.





Julie Furuta-Toy
U.S. Ambassador
to Equatorial Guinea

Julie Furuta-Toy (SFS) of Wyoming is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Most recently, she served as DCM and Chargé d’Affaires in Oslo, with previous overseas assignments in Accra, Moscow, Mumbai, Port-au-Prince, Manila and Mazatlán (Mexico). Her domestic assignments include tours in the Bureau of Consular Affairs as director in the Office of Children’s Issues, the Office of Public and Diplomatic Liaison and the Office of Coordination; Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; and Bureau of Human Resources.





David R. Gilmour

U.S. Ambassador to Togo

David R. Gilmour (SFS) of Texas is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Togolese Republic. Most recently, he served as deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs (AF). Previously, he was director of the Office of Public Diplomacy in AF, DCM in Panama City, public affairs counselor at the U.S. Mission in Geneva and DCM in Lilongwe. His other overseas assignments include postings in Australia, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Senegal and South Africa.



Appointments





Dennis B. Hankins

U.S. Ambassador to Guinea

Dennis B. Hankins (SFS) of Minnesota is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea. Most recently, he was consul general in Sao Paulo. Prior to this, he served as DCM in Khartoum and in Nouakchott. He also served as the deputy director in the Bureau of International Organizations, consul general in Riyadh and DCM in Maputo. His other overseas assignments include posts in Portugal, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, Haiti, Sudan and Thailand.



Appointments





Robert P. Jackson
U.S. Ambassador to
Ghana

Robert P. Jackson (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana. Most recently, he served as principal deputy assistant secretary for African Affairs. Prior to that, he was ambassador to Cameroon, DCM in Morocco and DCM in Senegal. He also served as director of the Office for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy; A-100 course coordinator; and country officer for Botswana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. His other overseas postings include Burundi, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Portugal and Zimbabwe.





Sarah Elizabeth Mendelson

U.S. Representative on the Economic and Social Council of the U.N.

Sarah Elizabeth Mendelson is the new U.S. Representative on the Economic and Social Council of the U.N., with the rank of ambassador. She is also the U.S. Alternate Representative to sessions of the U.N. General Assembly. Most recently, she was senior adviser and director of the Human Rights Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C. From 2010-2014, she was deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance at USAID, and previously, senior fellow in the Russia and Eurasia Program at CSIS and assistant professor at The Fletcher School, Tufts University.





Edwin Richard Nolan, Jr.
U.S. Ambassador to Suriname

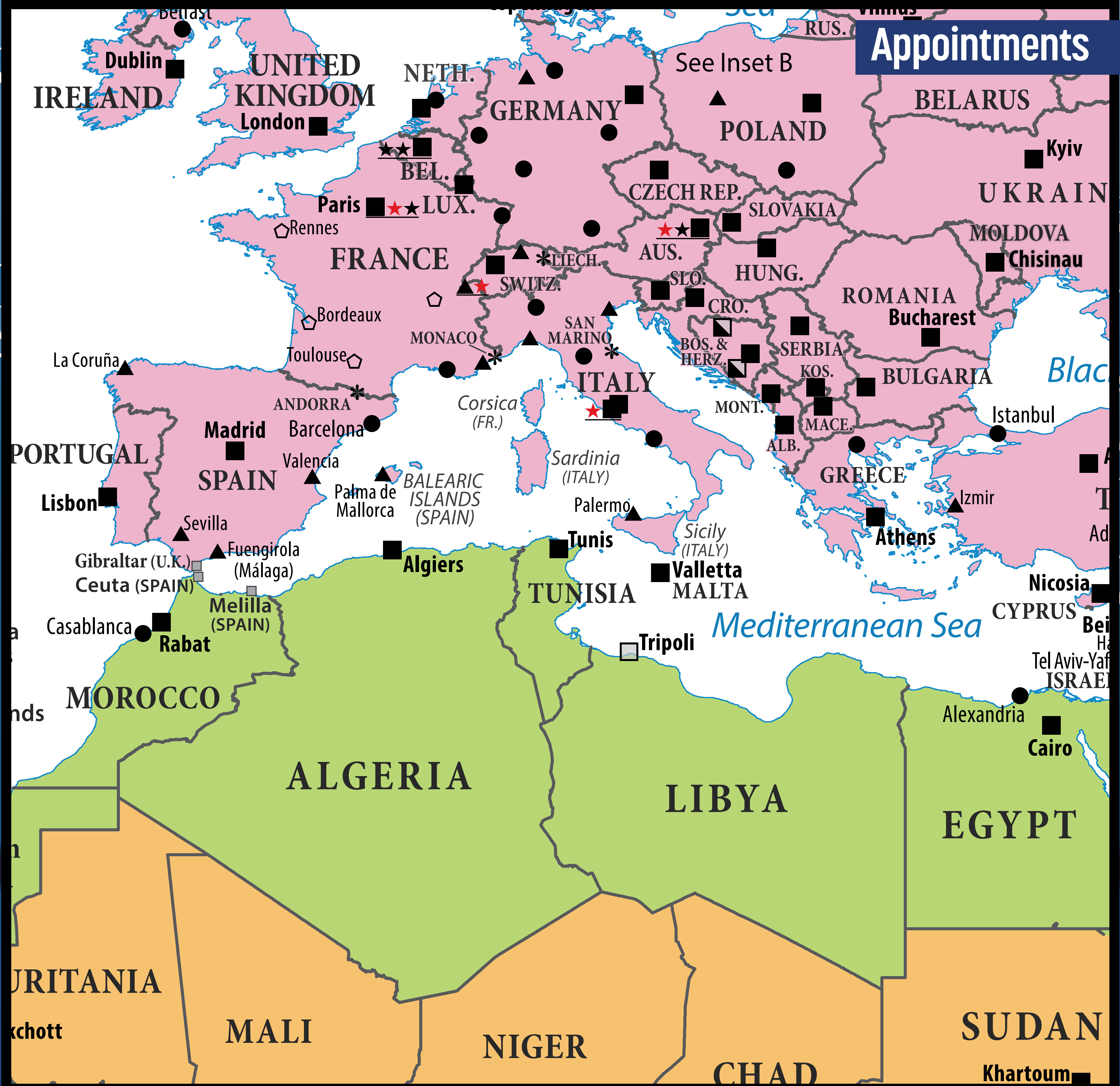
Edwin Richard Nolan, Jr. (SFS) of Massachusetts is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname. Most recently, he served as minister counselor for political affairs in Ottawa. Previously, he was DCM and Chargé d’Affaires in The Hague, director of the Office of Canadian Affairs in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, political officer in the Office of European Union Affairs in the Bureau of European Affairs and deputy director of the Office of United Kingdom, Benelux, and Ireland. His other overseas assignments include DCM in Nicosia and pol/econ chief in Dublin.





U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia

Daniel H. Rubinstein (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia. Most recently, he served as special envoy for Syria in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Before that, he was principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, consul general in Jerusalem, chief of the Civilian Observer Unit for the Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai, DCM in Amman and director of the Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs. His overseas posts include Brazil, Syria, Angola, Israel and Tunisia.





Lucy Tamlyn

U.S. Ambassador to Benin

Lucy Tamlyn (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Benin. Most recently, she served as director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Previously, she was DCM in Lisbon and in N'Djamena. She also served as economic counselor at the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris and as Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader in Erbil, Iraq. She worked at USUN missions in New York and Rome and has also served at posts in Austria, Brazil, Colombia and Mozambique.



In Memoriam

Adams

Alden

Barr

Fine

Fritts

Kalodimos

Keene

Makepeace

McKiernan

Moose

Morgan

Rau

Rosa, Jr.

Stephens

Wentworth

Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact Michael Hahn at hahnmg@state.gov or (202) 663-2230.



In Memoriam

Alvin Adams



Alvin Adams, 73, a retired FSO and three-time ambassador, died Oct. 10 in Portland, Ore. He joined the Department in 1967. His first overseas posting was Vietnam during the war; he then served as special assistant to Secretaries Al Haig and Henry Kissinger. Before the age of 50, under Presidents Reagan, Bush and Clinton, he held ambassadorships to Djibouti, Haiti and Peru. His work in Haiti paved the way for the first freely elected president and earned him special commendation. He also served as deputy director for counterterrorism. After retiring in 1996, he was president of the United Nations Association.



In Memoriam

John Standish Alden



John Standish Alden, 85, a retired FSO, died July 19 in Rockland, Maine. He began his career with USAID in 1956 and retired in 1981. His overseas postings were in Laos, Iran, Thailand, Morocco and Kenya. After leaving the Foreign Service, he joined Management Sciences for Health in Boston, Mass., where for six years he directed USAID's worldwide child oral rehydration project. In 1990, he began consulting independently and focused his efforts on the medical treatment of land mine victims in Mozambique and Angola.



In Memoriam

Alan Whittier Barr



Alan Whittier Barr, 80, a retired FSO, died at home June 14 in Davis, Calif. He joined the Department in 1970 after serving in the Peace Corps and Navy. His overseas postings included Brussels, Lagos, Thessaloniki, Milan, Singapore, Jakarta and Vientiane. From 1984 to 1987, as coordinator of the refugee program in Singapore and Indonesia, he most notably contributed to resettling tens of thousands of Vietnamese boat people. After his retirement in 1996, he was executive director of the chamber of commerce and vice president of the Emery Education Foundation and the Transportation Management Association in Emeryville, Calif.



In Memoriam

Sherman Jay Fine



Sherman Jay Fine, 89, a retired FSO, died July 30 in San Francisco, Calif. He served in the Merchant Marines during World War II and the Army during the Korean War. He worked for the Department of the Navy in Washington, D.C., before joining State in 1962. His postings included Tehran, Kabul, Vienna, Rome and London. He retired in 1988 and was actively involved as a volunteer with Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic in Washington.



In Memoriam

Robert E. Fritts



Robert E. Fritts, 80, a retired FSO and former ambassador to Rwanda and Ghana, died Sept. 28 in Williamsburg, Va. He served in the Navy before joining the Department in 1959. His overseas posts included Luxembourg, Japan, Indonesia and Sudan before his first ambassadorship, to Rwanda, at age 39. Following retirement in 1991, he was on the faculty of the College of William & Mary and served as a U.N. election observer and on the boards of many civic and foreign policy organizations. He loved choral music and was a canoeist and fisherman, as well as a tennis and golf enthusiast.



In Memoriam

Magdeline G. Kalodimos



Magdeline G. Kalodimos, 87, a retired Civil Service employee, died Sept. 30 in Chicago, Ill. She joined the Department in 1956 as a Foreign Service secretary. Her overseas posts included Tel Aviv, Bonn, Paris, Lisbon and Panama City. From 1975 until retirement in 1993, she worked in Washington, D.C. An animal lover, dancer and fashionista, she shared each exotic assignment with her many family members through countless letters, postcards and phone calls. She never forgot a birthday, graduation or any special occasion, and could accessorize any ensemble and set the standard for elegance, professionalism and grace.



In Memoriam

Douglas Ralph Keene



Douglas Ralph Keene, 71, a retired FSO, died Oct. 7 in Scarborough, Maine. He worked briefly for the IRS before joining the Department in 1967. He first served in Vietnam, followed by postings to Warsaw, Karachi, Cairo, Tel Aviv, and to Muscat and Amman, where he was DCM. During the first Gulf War he was director of Arabian Peninsula Affairs. Retiring in 2002, he and his wife Beth traveled extensively. He enjoyed developing his Virginia wine cellar, fine dining and theater in Washington, retracing Civil War history, tennis and beach naps in Ocean Park, Maine, close to family and grandchildren.



In Memoriam

Lindsay Harper Makepeace



Lindsay Harper Makepeace, 89, widow of former FSO LeRoy Makepeace, died Oct. 7 from complications of Alzheimer's disease at the Forest Side Nursing Home in Washington, D.C. She served alongside her husband in West Berlin, New Delhi, Peshawar, Ankara and Madras before he retired and returned to live in Washington in 1971. An accomplished watercolorist and printmaker, she studied fine art in West Berlin and at the Corcoran School of Art and was involved in the Washington Women's Art Center and Spectrum Gallery in Georgetown.



In Memoriam

Thomas Deglan McKiernan

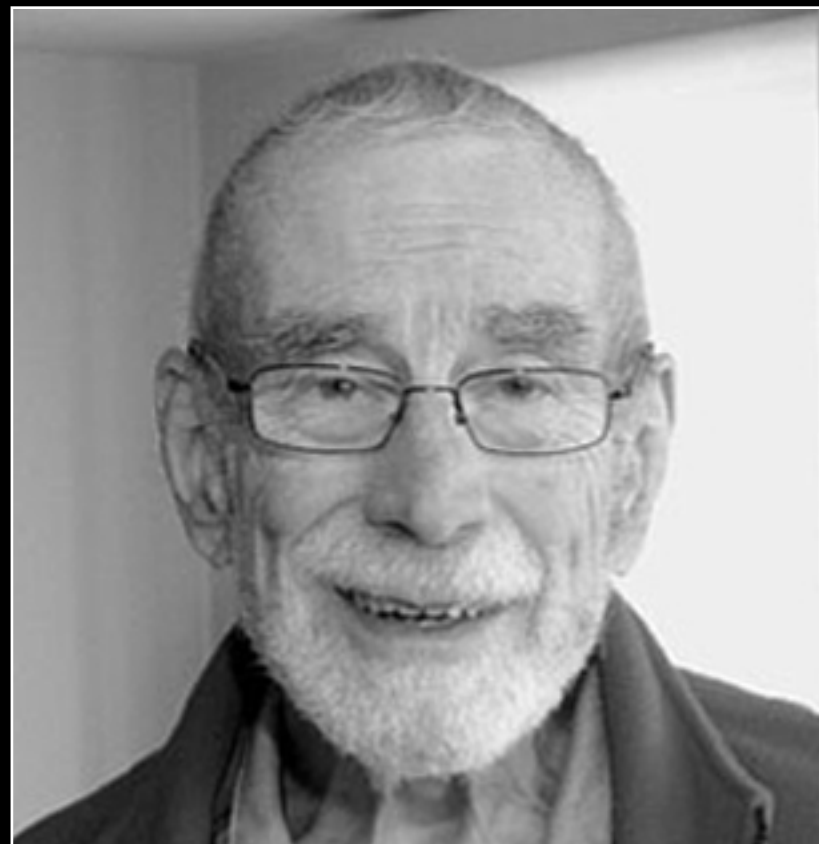


Thomas Deglan McKiernan, 95, a retired FSO, died Sept. 29 in Marblehead, Mass. He served in the Army during World War II and joined the Department in 1946. A specialist in German affairs with consular and politico-military assignments, his postings included Casablanca, Rotterdam, Berlin, Paris (NATO Defense College), Bamako and Nicosia. He retired in 1972 after his last tour, in Izmir, as consul general. He and his wife Claire settled in Marblehead and enjoyed an active retirement, highlighted by volunteer activities and foreign travel. Building on a longtime avocation, he became a serious and locally well-known oil and watercolor painter.



In Memoriam

Richard M. Moose



Richard M. Moose, 83, a retired FSO and esteemed voice among U.S. foreign policymakers, died Sept. 25 in Alexandria, Va. He joined the Department in 1956 and was posted to Mexico and Cameroon. He worked at the National Security Council and Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Appointed by President Carter as U.S. assistant secretary for African Affairs, he helped end apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia. Following stints with Shearson Lehman and American Express, he returned to public service as undersecretary of state for management under President Clinton. In retirement since 1996, he devoted himself to environmental and civic causes.



In Memoriam

Raecarol Morgan



Raecarol Morgan, 83, a retired FSO, died Sept. 14 at a healthcare facility in St. Joseph, Mo. She joined the Department in 1957 and held consular assignments at posts in La Paz, Cairo, Tokyo, Seoul, Caracas, Managua and Vancouver. She retired in 1996 and continued to live in Washington, D.C., volunteering with the U.S. Capitol Guide Service. In 2010, she returned to Missouri, where she was born and raised.



In Memoriam

Donald Edward Rau



Donald Edward Rau, 86, a retired FSO, died Oct. 10 at home in Salinas, Calif. He served in the Army soon after World War II and then joined the Department in 1952. His postings included Dhaka, Colombo, Chennai, Bern, Kathmandu, Hong Kong and Canberra. In Washington, as assistant director of security enhancement, he worked on surveys of high-risk consulates and embassies. He retired in 1984 and settled with his wife Martha in Salinas, where he enjoyed traveling and writing essays and true tales.



In Memoriam

Frank Louis Rosa, Jr.



Frank Louis Rosa, Jr., 66, a Civil Service employee, died Oct. 5 at his home in Edinburg, Va. A retired Lt. Col. in the Air Force who served in Vietnam and also taught at the Air Force Academy in Colorado, he joined the Department in 2007. He worked for the Bureau of International Information Programs, primarily covering the Western hemisphere, and was a passionate advocate for public diplomacy. He is deeply missed by his colleagues.



In Memoriam

Bart Nelson Stephens



Bart Nelson Stephens, 93, a retired FSO, died Oct. 5 in Lynchburg, Va. A decorated World War II Navy combat veteran, he took part in the landings at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He joined the Department in 1949 and served as a public affairs officer in Thessaloniki and other posts in Greece, twice in Germany, Poland, Vietnam, Austria and Thailand. He retired from USIA in 1982 and lived in McLean, Va., before moving to Lynchburg in 1987.



In Memoriam

John P. “Basil” Wentworth



John P. “Basil” Wentworth, 90, a retired FSO, died Oct. 3 in Mechanicsburg, Pa. He joined the Department in 1955 and served in Colombia, Cyprus, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Ethiopia, Israel and Australia. In 1958, while stationed in Nicosia, he was shot and seriously wounded outside his home, apparently the mistaken target of a Cypriot terrorist. He retired in 1978. A wordsmith and punster, he enjoyed writing limericks and other poetry. He played various instruments and composed chamber music, operettas, choral music, and arranged music for bands and chamber groups around the world, and loved to sing.



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End State



Festina lente (Latin for "make haste slowly") is a bridge over the Miljacka River in Sarajevo. The footpath is 38 meters long and features an unusual loop in the middle that encourages pedestrians to slow down and enjoy the view.

Photo by Marco

